VIDURA

A JOURNAL OF THE PRESS INSTITUTE OF INDIA

APRIL - JUNE 2011
VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2 RS. 50

Media soul-searching needed, for credibility's sake

Fourth Estate under EC scanner

Media has tasted the fruits of 'paid news'

हिन्दी मिलाप

DAILY HINDI MILAP

Published from Hyderabad past 64 years

Member

Audit Bureau of Circulations

5-4-674, Kattalmandi, Hyderabad-500 001. ☎ 040-24732583, 24732586 email : milapresponse@gmail.com

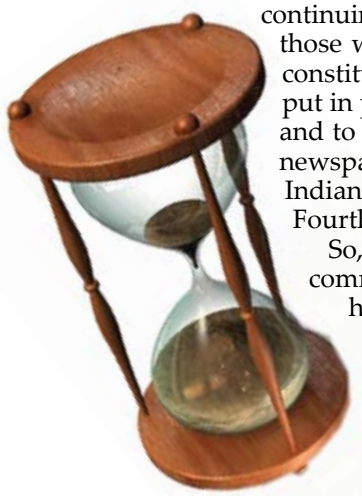
Winner of Bronze Award in Table Diary 2011 Category by Public Relations Council of India.

Advertise with us - REACH THE BEST

Time to set the house in order

Corruption is as old as the hills and present worldwide. Sadly, India happens to be one of the top ten countries where corruption is the most rampant. Malpractices in the media are nothing new. It is not as though the Radia tapes suddenly opened out a whole new world that was hitherto unknown. What it brought into sharp focus was the fact that even some of the superstars of media were dabbling in dangerous territory. It is a malaise that not only all well-meaning journalists but also PR practitioners and communicators must strive to eradicate, and eradicate quickly. Making words work is not enough for a journalist or editor. It must be accompanied by a pledge to remain above board and earn the respect of people.

For all well-meaning journalists in India, *Open Magazine's* expose, what it called the X-Tapes, came as a rude shock and media gained an unsavoury hue. Were there clean-up operations in the media thereafter, or are such operations possible at all? Will some journalists be tempted again to "string a source along"? Would the BBC, *The Guardian* or *The New York Times* have tolerated such errant behaviour from their reporters? There is no doubt that the bar needs to be set higher. Journalists must be governed by a code of ethics, or there must be a set of codified rules and anyone transgressing the line should have no place in the profession.



Unless stringent steps are taken, unless there is a continuing debate among senior editors, publishers and those who matter, about journalistic ethics and what constitutes right and wrong, unless mechanisms are put in place to redress reader's or viewer's grievances and to admit and correct mistakes, not by one or two newspapers, but by the newspaper publishing and Indian radio and television world in general, the Fourth Estate may not regain its lustre easily.

So, is the Fourth Estate today the voice of the common man or the voice of corporate bodies? Or has marketing got the better of mass media? Read what N. Bhaskara Rao and P.N. Vasanti of the Centre for Media Studies have to say in the lead article: Media and corporate bodies: challenges and opportunities. Providing

another interesting perspective about the corporate India-media nexus is Suvabrata Ganguly, who says that media often ignores stories that need to be told.

In the midst of all the gloom comes a spark of light in the form of Anna Hazare and the Lokpal Bill. Ranjona Banerjee has a word of caution for the journalist – observe and don't overreact. She says that as politics change in a participatory democracy, the responsibility of the media becomes greater.

There has been a lot of talk about 'paid news' in India, in drawing and dining rooms in many homes. Many people are not quite sure what it is all about. Is it about paying money to get news published? Or is it a factor that plays out only during election time? Former chief election commissioner T.S. Krishnamurthy had some pertinent things to say on the subject some months ago while addressing a group of PR managers and all of it has relevance now, with elections just about coming to a close in five states.

D. Suresh Kumar writes about how the Media Certification and Monitoring Committees set up by the Election Commission to keep a watch of all advertisements, political coverage and paid news during the conduct of Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry has affected reporting. And providing a picture from Guwahati is Nava Thakuria.

Is the media paying enough attention to achievers on the sports field? Cricketers hog the limelight always, we all know that; but what about other sportsmen and women? It is time the media began playing a fairer role to all sport beyond the cricket field, says S. Muthiah. Against the backdrop of reporting on the Commonwealth Games, he adds it is time media also showed passion for pushing government to improve sports facilities and training.

S.R. Madhu provides a fascinating account of how the status of women in the media in India has undergone a change that might have been unimaginable even three decades ago. Today, women call the shots in newsrooms; they are the face of television as reporters and anchors. Often very successful, they bring qualities such as empathy, sensitivity and the power of observance to the fore.

Jacob Mathew, executive editor and publisher, Malayala Manorama Group of Publications, and a trustee of the Press Institute of India, being elected president of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) is a matter of pride for all of us. Mathew is the first Indian and only the second Asian to be bestowed such status. He will begin his two-year term on 1 July. We wish him the very best.

The passing away of veteran journalist Ajit Bhattacharjee in New Delhi is a sad moment for all those who knew him closely, and for us here at the Press Institute of India of which he was a former director. On behalf of the Institute let me convey to the bereaved family the deepest sympathies of each one of us.

Sashi Nair
editor@pressinstitute.in

CONTENTS

Editorial 1

Media and corporate bodies: challenges and opportunities 4
N. Bhaskara Rao and P.N. Vasanti

Can black money, red tape and yellow journalism stifle our prayer to go green? 9
Suvobrata Ganguly

Observe first, and jump to conclusions later 11
Ranjona Banerji

Fourth Estate under EC scanner: a sad commentary on the media ... 14
D. Suresh Kumar

Media has tasted the fruits of 'paid news'..... 16
Sashi Nair

Paid news: what can be done to get rid of the scourge? 19
Nava Thakuria

An unsympathetic media 32
S. Muthiah

Have newspapers lost their sting? 25
Ravindra Dubey and K. Tiwari

Media and advertising grapple with constantly changing roles 27

Reporters can now deliver by using simple tools 29

Improved design, contant can attract newspaper readership 31

Women in the Indian media – then and now 33
S. R. Madhu

A refreshing look at the media in India *(Book Review)* 38
C.S.H.N. Murthy

Subba Rao Pantulu: for whom journalism was a mission 40
N. Meera Raghavendra Rao

News 44

I BET NOWHERE IN THAT ARTICLE WILL YOU READ THAT THEY RAZED TWICE THAT NUMBER TO SET UP THEIR NEW FACTORY.
CSR Initiatives:
"Go Green"
CEO plants
1000 trees

WELCOME ABOARD, MS GUPTA. HERE'S YOUR ID CARD, LUNCH COUPONS...NAIL POLISH AND LIPSTICK REMOVER...THE PAPER BAG IS OPTIONAL, BUT REMEMBER,OUR DRESS CODE ALLOWS ONLY SAREES.

Media and corporate bodies: challenges and opportunities

The media is deemed the Fourth Estate and 'the people's voice'. It is a watchdog on the powers that be. But whose voice is the media today? Is it more a corporate voice than that of the community? Who matters more between the consumer and the citizen?

Is the media concerned more with markets or with society? Is it Marketing Media or Mass Media? Read what N. Bhaskara Rao, founder chairman, Centre for Media Studies, and P.N. Vasanti, director, CMS & CMS Academy, have to say about all this, and also how TV channels, in order to sustain 24-hour news with TRPs, have taken to hype, while continuing their preoccupation with politics, crime and corporate happenings. The larger question: will all of this have implications on the democratic processes?

P.N. Vasanti
Director, CMS & CMS Academy

N. Bhaskara Rao
Founder chairman, Centre for Media Studies

Despite so much talk about the relationship between media and corporate bodies in India, very little is in public purview, barring some recent bits on 'private treaties' (now brand capital). Based on extensive research for 15 years, we have been writing about a shift in the paradigm of media operations. An analysis of that emerging scenario was published first in *Frontline* (2001) and then in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (2002). We have expanded that understanding further in our 2005 publication titled *Media Scene as India Globalises*. More recently, *A Handbook on Poll Surveys in Media* (2010) described how political and corporate interests are hyped up and camouflaged without transparency in electoral processes. This article discusses these processes further.

A suitable alliance

There are two emerging issues. One is the relationship between media and corporate bodies; two, the media becoming 'corporatised'. The latter is to do more with the obvious paradigm shift in media operations in recent years. The former is more about the media's dependence on companies for support by way of advertising. Both are interrelated. There is a cause-and-effect relationship. Which is cause and which is effect is difficult to say now or at any one point. One thing for sure is that the role of the corporate sector is getting consolidated.

The driving principle of corporate bodies is profit maximisation. Return on investment to shareholders is a differentiator. Media, on the other hand, is supposed to operate without conflict of interest. Traditionally, in democracies, the media function is viewed as a service. The media is deemed the Fourth Estate and as 'the people's voice'. It is a watchdog on the powers that be. But whose voice is the media today? Is it more a corporate voice than of the community? Who matters more between the consumer and the citizen? Is the media concerned more with markets or with society? Is it Marketing Media or Mass Media?

Our publication in 1995, titled *Marketing Media – Perspective into Media,* captured the emerging phenomenon. Today, 'corporate culture' is all over and entrenched in the media too. What factors could have caused this? The finer points in that process are how much 'means' matter for 'ends'.

Shifts in paradigm

With the relatively recent proliferation of TV, radio and newspapers in the country, the overall role, reach and relevance of the media should have expanded much beyond what it was a decade ago. However, there has hardly been any change in both respects. This is because the competition within and across the media has been for the same sections of people, those having deeper pockets (to purchase branded goods and services). We feel that the increase in circulation and viewership claimed is because of multiplicity, not because of expansion in reach.

Today new definitions, new news values and new priorities dictate the media. What does this paradigm shift mean? What is the dilemma involved? Is the media a public service or for private interests? Societal concerns vs. market priorities, stakeholders vs. shareholders, short-term vs. long-term implications, these are the considerations. Then, of course come the contradictions to do with blurred distinctions between news and views, news and advertisements, "to interest" versus "in the interest" and so on.

'Advertising capital'

Today, advertising and market research in many ways determine the scope of mass media, including journalistic trends. A decade ago, by allowing 100 percent FDI in both the fields, the advertising and market research functions were placed in the hands of corporate bodies mostly controlled from abroad. Indeed, advertising, market research and media planning set the pace for media, including in the case of ownership patterns and journalistic trends. Generally, the control of these 'determining factors' has changed, with no one raising an issue or a debate at any level. In a way, this amounts to corporate disciplining of the media.

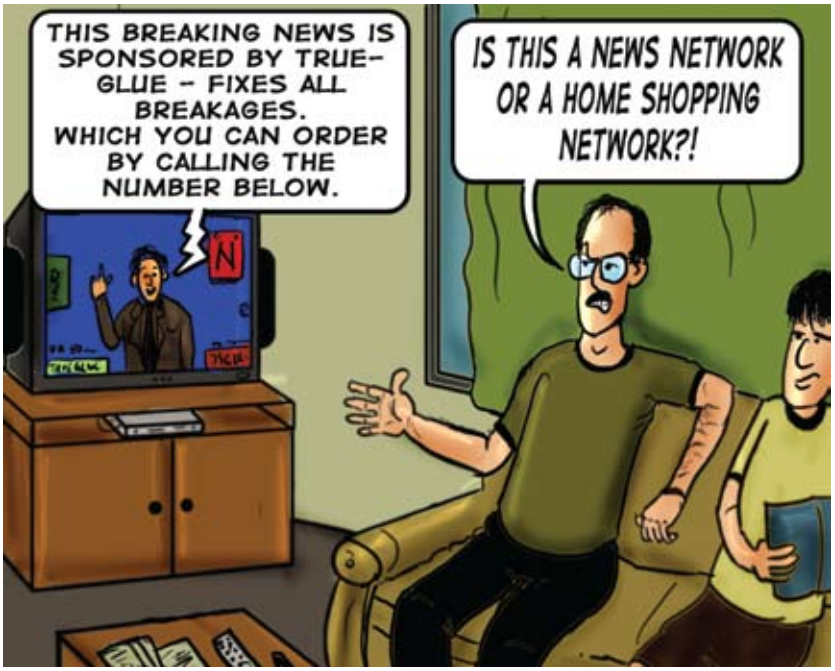

THIS BREAKING NEWS IS SPONSORED BY TRUE-GLUE - FIXES ALL BREAKAGES. WHICH YOU CAN ORDER BY CALLING THE NUMBER BELOW.
IS THIS A NEWS NETWORK OR A HOME SHOPPING NETWORK?!

Illustration by Arun Ramkumar

The share of advertising in the media's total revenues has been on the increase from that of a 'supplementary' (25-30 per cent) nature some decades ago, to that of a 'supportive' one (45-55 per cent) now. In fact, in the case of television channels, advertising has become the 'primary source' (60-80 per cent) of determining priorities and preoccupations. In the case of some big newspapers, too, revenue from advertising constitutes as high as 60 per cent of total revenue. Therefore, the recent boom in the Indian media is often being attributed to advertising. Clearly, advertising today sustains and steers the media.

Secondly, advertising through newspapers and television today is mostly by multinationals and big corporate houses. Entry of foreign advertising agencies has been going on parallel to the entry of foreign brands and rise in the share of foreign corporate houses in the total advertising in the country. Lifting the limits of foreign capital in advertising agencies has opened the floodgates. Well over half of Indian advertising is now accounted for by overseas-based corporate agencies.

Thirdly, market research is a basis for proliferation of brands and consumerism as well as for the preoccupation and priorities of the mass media. The very scope and character of advertising is dependent on such research. Two decades ago, we had about six or seven market research agencies, owned mostly by Indians. Today, the top seven or eight market research agencies, accounting for more than three-fourths of research, are foreign agencies. In fact, with recent mergers and acquisitions, certain monopolistic trends are already evident, with annual turnover exceeding Rs 1500 crore. More specifically, market research agencies are those who conduct readership surveys and rate television viewership. They thereby directly influence

advertising agencies as well as the news media's anxiety. One of the authors was involved in launching India-specific readership and rating studies 30 years ago and feels guilty for what is happening today, particularly the way the findings of these surveys are being used both by newspapers and TV channels as if a national agenda has been hijacked. About a decade ago, the trend was coined as the 'TRP trap', with larger and long-range implications to our nation-building efforts.

Since 2000, as the media eco-system became complex, two 'new' mediating functionaries have emerged with serious consequences to the very nature and character of the journalist-centered Fourth Estate. These are 'media planning' and 'public relations' – these have in many ways eroded the core prerogatives of journalists and their 'editorial control'. Media planners are the ones involved these days in buying wholesale space and the time of the media, too, for advertising and selling the same in retail on their terms. In the process, they have acquired a say on the contents of the media.

Indeed, in the case of corporate public relations, functioning of these 'experts' implies undermining of or interference in the functioning, particularly of news reporters and editors, and their marginalisation. The very purpose of PR is to ensure coverage for a particular viewpoint or otherwise. 'Disinformation' that is being talked about recently, is a part of the new phenomenon.

Foreign investment in media

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has lured media institutions to turn themselves into market-driven corporate organisations. How well a media is 'corporatised' is a criteria for foreign investors. This means marketing and advertising of the media as a 'brand'. And to attract FDI, the news media is turning itself into corporate entities.

According to the Registrar of Newspapers' annual reports, the percentage of newspapers that are 'corporate' has gone up to about 30 from less than 15 percent in 2000. As broadcasting is capital intensive, all television and radio operations are corporate groups. The entrance of FDI into media, particularly into news media, has to be viewed together against whether there are any regulations and obligations for foreign participation and what kind – not just in terms of equity pattern but also content. No country is without some restrictions on foreign investments and content-related obligations. Once the government allowed FDI as part of economic reforms, media moghuls have been taking interest in the Indian media market. For pursuing that interest, they needed cheer leaders as their advance party. That was how initially, 100 percent FDI was allowed into businesses, which "support and sustain" the news media.

These businesses include advertising, market research, public relations and more recently media planning. In 1995, we described them as the 'new gatekeepers' of the media. These businesses today dominate the Indian media and influence policies about the media. That is how FDI into news media is being consistently increased. This implies further 'corporatisation' of Indian media.

What does 'corporatisation' of media mean?

What do we mean when we say that the media is 'corporatised'? Some features include: enhanced capital investments, expanded reach, bigger content package, and a more attractive and more market-oriented 'product'. Of course, more advertising support and adoption of new high-end technologies. 'Corporatisation' has brought in competition and competitiveness.

All that has helped explore untapped markets and reach some sections of society that have never been reached. For investors, the media has become more attractive than ever before. In the process, media has become a business opportunity, deriving other advantage including political and social clout.

For example, businesses like real estate, which have made much faster money, have ventured into a newspaper or a TV channel to 'arrive' on the local political scene.

In the process, the role of the editor and the journalist is no longer what it once was. They have become 'employees', not so much

FDI in media (without a policy debate)	
Films	100%
Advertising	100%
Market Research	100%
Public Relations	100%
TV-Non news	100%
Technical Journals	74%
TV News	26-49%
Newspapers	26-49%
Radio – FM	20-49%
DTH	20- 49%
Cable TV	49%

FDI permitted in newspapers and television stations remains below the 50 per cent mark.

stakeholders. With Wage Boards becoming ineffective, in spite of an Act of Parliament, journalists no longer enjoy independence as they used to. Marketing and advertising functions have become more important. Share value in the stock market has become a priority rather than watchdog functions. Big media has become bigger and is becoming even bigger and is aspiring to become a monopolistic industry. Thirty years ago, about 30 media enterprises dominated most (75 per cent) of the media in the country. Today, less than 15 media houses have that share. All this, without strictly coming under active legal and regulatory provisions that apply to corporate bodies. A more recent example is that SEBI, despite acknowledging its concern about private treaties, could not directly notify its directives to the media engaged in such practices. Instead, it suggested the same to the Press Council of India (PCI) knowing well that PCI has no teeth to take any action.

"Freedom of the press should not be turned into commerce," said Ravi Shankar Prasad, BJP leader who represented the party at the Election Commission meet in October 2010. At the same meet, a Congress spokesperson (perhaps Jayanthi Natarajan) also talked about democracy and freedom of the press. Former Chief Justice of India Dr A S Anand said, "While commercialism has a legitimate place in the business office of the newspaper, it becomes a danger when it invades the editorial room." "Today, there are some genuine concerns about the way in which some sections of the media function," Justice Anand said, adding, "the liberty of the press cannot be confused with its licentiousness." Successive Presidents and Prime Ministers have also said the same thing at one point or another during their tenures – of course, making no difference to the ongoing process of 'corporatisation' of media and their increasing hold on the media.

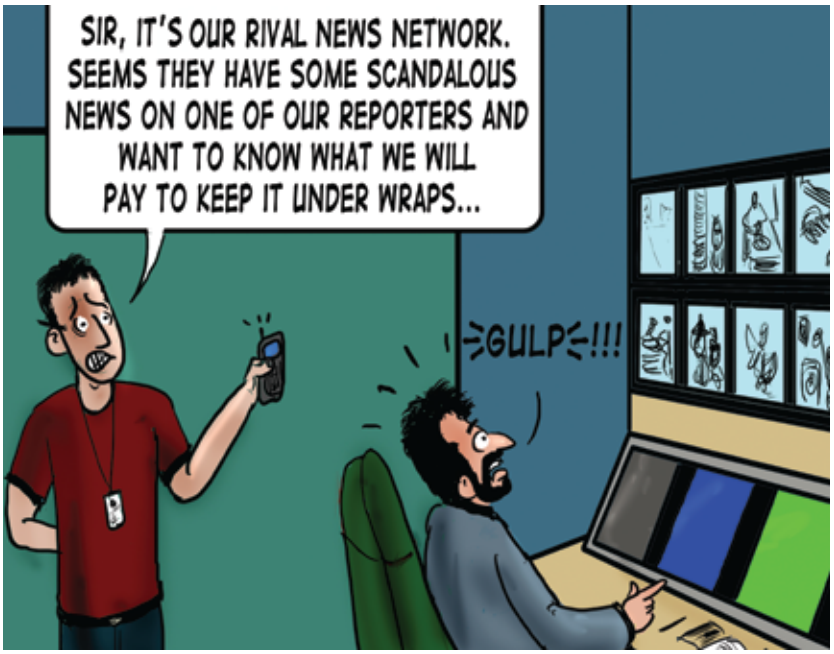

SIR, IT'S OUR RIVAL NEWS NETWORK. SEEMS THEY HAVE SOME SCANDALOUS NEWS ON ONE OF OUR REPORTERS AND WANT TO KNOW WHAT WE WILL PAY TO KEEP IT UNDER WRAPS...
=GULP=!!!

Illustration by Arun Ramkumar

Equity business is now brand capital

'Private treaties' perhaps epitomises the nexus between the media and the corporate world. It is also a precursor and another reminder of the 'corporate media' regime. The SEBI chairman has expressed his concern about private treaties that media enter into with corporate houses, as they "harm fair, unbiased news". SEBI felt that it would lead to "commercialisation of news reports".

Private treaties are the ones some media houses enter with companies that are listed or which propose to come out with public offers and, in return, promote the companies with positive reports and/or advertisements. To gear up treaties for a larger role, The Times of India has renamed this 'equity business' as 'brand capital'. It hopes to generate 'advertising capital' for corporate businesses and growth in advertising revenue for news media.

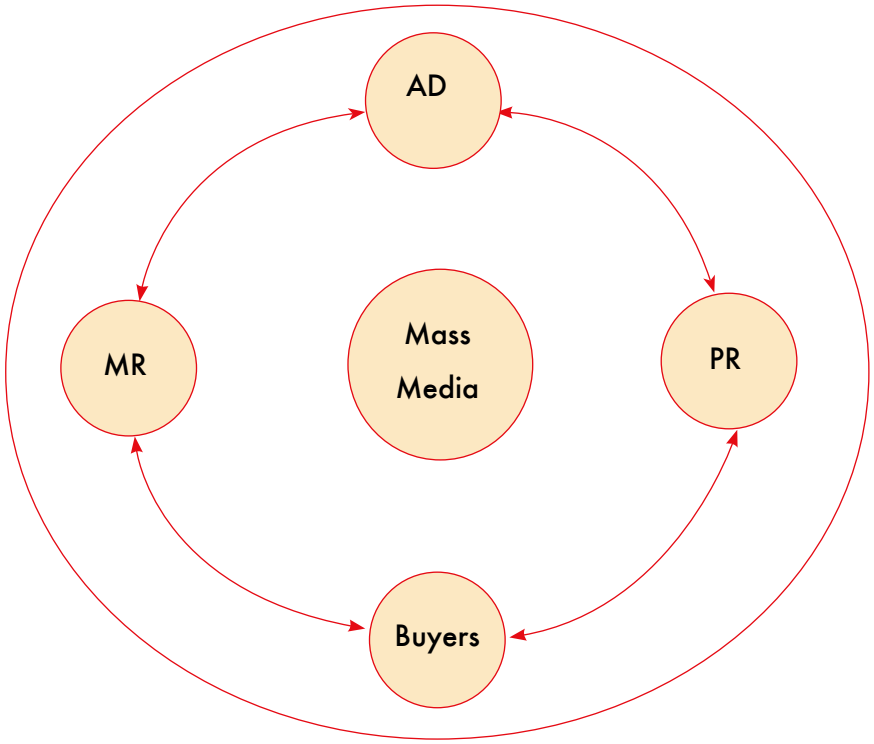
Has 'corporatisation' helped media?

'Corporatisation' of the mass media has helped both horizontal and lateral expansion – the very impressive growth story that is lauded worldwide. To achieve these impressive growth rates, corporate agencies have relied rather heavily on advertising in the media and also on market research.

The regional language media has benefited even more. 'Corporatisation' has attracted a new crop of youngsters into the profession, created many new job functions and better opportunities. It has also made media marketing and media management distinct specialisations.

India is going to see 'corporatization' of the media even more in the coming years. To cope with the process, we need to prepare better so that the media's privileged position (Fourth Estate) is not threatened, and the media continues to play a positive role in strengthening democracy and better serves the Indian Constitution.

NEW GATEKEEPERS OF MEDIA CONTENT?



Can there be a right balance?

The challenges and opportunities involved are nothing but the pros and cons of 'corporatisation'. Considering the global trends, there is not much choice – 'corporatisation' is perhaps a compulsion today. That is why the effort now should be how to retain the virtues, rather than how to minimise the effects of corporate compulsions. Five features that illustrate the Fourth Estate and watchdog standing of the media are:

1) Conflict of interest on content
2) Transparency in operations and priorities
3) Reflecting plurality of voices of people
4) Reflection of certain self-imposed discipline and concerns of people
5) Balance of information, communication and entertainment components.

Need for a talk-back culture

The best bet for realising the opportunities is active viewers, readers and listeners who care to manifest their preferences, choices, likes and dislikes, according to their own concerns. They are more passive now. Only an insignificant few consumers of media, even those who pay on a recurring basis, care to do so. As media is likely to become more and more 'pay as per use' (as mobile phone charges have become now), users have to be more active and talk back.

Second, we need a regulatory system with checks and balance practices (self regulation, industry regulation and an independent audit). The Supreme Court's landmark judgment (1995) that air waves belong to the public and an independent regulator should manage the natural resource has been ignored by successive governments since. News media cannot operate in a 'free for all' environment. Even corporate organisations do not operate that way, even though they operate to maximise profits.

Third, media has double-edged character. As special efforts are needed to reap positive effects, punitive acts are required to keep negative effects away. These efforts are not just by 'rule of laws' but a more concerned and assertive citizenry.

Fourth, realisation of role and significance of research is needed to monitor, analyse and find out effects. This has to be an on-going support. But, not based on top-of-the-mind approach currently in vogue.

Fifth, transparency in media operations enhances credibility. The RTI Act should apply to media establishments, too. Conflict of interest should be questionable by citizens and civil society groups. Media on their own should evolve ways of indicating such conflict, as has already been demonstrated by few media.

Sixth, news media should have ombudsman or "readers editor" like mechanism but with scope for some independence and objective assessment.

Summing up, the current trend and compulsions in our news media is well established in the recent film by Amir Khan – Peepli Live. It aptly brought out the neglect of the rural poor and backward regions. There is no longer any uncertainty that to sustain 24-hour news with TRPs, television channels have taken to hype and trivializing, while continuing their preoccupation with politics, crime and corporate happenings as far as content and concerns go. But how long will the trend continue before it has implications on the democratic processes and before its own credibility is questioned? That's the vital point.

Can black money, red tape and yellow journalism stifle our prayer to go green?

Suvobrata Ganguly

We have sinned. For close to three hundred years now, we have in our vainglorious desire to play god plundered and pillaged mother earth, wantonly burning fossil fuels to chart a path of conspicuous consumption, taking step after perilous step towards destruction. Yes, as the twin threats facing mankind – global warming and climate change – unleash one destructive natural phenomenon after the other, many of us are sitting up and taking note.

Alas, to many more of us, it is also an opportunity – to peddle products in the garb of green. Let us not talk of the new brigade of laptop wielding, Blackberry-powered 'consultants' who charge corporate India mind-boggling fees to provide tips on how to conserve energy, reduce carbon footprints and earn credits by switching off lights; let us look at the problem from the core.

Take the case of energy security for example – the country needs humongous amounts of fuel – fossil fuels to quench its growth pangs – primarily for generating electricity. Now most of this coal happens to lie under forests, in the land of the tribals. People, whom the India Inc growth story has disdainfully bypassed. People, who have over successive generations been exploited by the local politician, the grassroots bureaucrat and the contractor-cum-village-moneylender-cum-businessman.

The question is simple. Why will a son of the soil part with his land for upcountry industrialists to rake in their millions? What is more, the industry is represented on the ground by the same troika of exploiters. No we don't seek answers here, for answers will mean redressing deep-rooted evils.

So we take the India option and we 'make do'. We have perfected the art of 'managing' obstacles – of bending the rules to suit our ends. The result: black money marries red tape to stifle the green concerns in the name of economic development. The social cost of development is not taken into consideration. And when there is unrest, which is welcomed surreptitiously, we go into the next loop. First look the other way to allow the trouble to brew. Then selectively foment the fire. And finally, call in the military to crush the opposition. Only, to clamour for developmental aid - another pie, to share among the brothers-in-arms – the politician, the bureaucrat and the businessman.

And it is here that we the journalists come in. First we tie ourselves in knots with terms that can be a mouthful – sustainable development, inclusive growth, corporate social responsibility. Naturally, we fail to

The writer, based in Kolkata, is the editor of Core Sector Communiqué, *a monthly that provides a micro view of the Indian economy. He also contributes to top English and Bengali dailies*

I BET NOWHERE IN THAT ARTICLE WILL YOU READ THAT THEY RAZED TWICE THAT NUMBER TO SET UP THEIR NEW FACTORY.
CSR initiative: "Go Green" CEO plants 1000 trees

Illustration by Arun Ramkumar

raise the relevant questions, forget about feeling and reporting the pulse of the people.

We moonshine and write the self-glorifying CSR initiatives that dot the innumerable corporate Web sites, making up things where there are none and exaggerating to match the imagined efforts to that of the stature of the entity. We trivialise and sensationalise in our vainglorious desire to make 'stories' out of scraps of information, ensconced in air-conditioned comfort not bothering to even visit the vast swathes of India that is almost alien to us. And when we are forced to go to the spot, to cover, for example, Rahul Gandhi making his "main Dilli main aap ka sipahi hoon" speech, we concentrate not on the burning issues of the day, but on his brand of sneakers.

How many of us know that there is an entire hillock where the coal seams are burning?

That there are families – entire villages that run the risk of being gobbled up by the burning inferno anytime. That Coal India, in an effort to resettle these poor people have given them alternative housing and yet they are refusing to budge as by relocating they run the risk of losing their livelihood – that of illegal mining.

I had asked one of the villagers about the risk posed by the underground fire to life and limb to which he and answered almost nonchalantly, that the fire that rages in the belly is much more lethal and that the walking dead have no fear.

Most of us would not be aware of this story, leave alone report it as it will not be 'fed' to us by obliging PR personnel at a 'media interaction' in a five star hotel complete with a background note, high-resolution photographs, ready-to-use quotes and a little gift-wrapped something from the management. It's a vicious circle – corporate India picks up the tab through advertisements and endorsements.

They are also the most affluent of our readers to whom messages are targeted by our other advertisers. Our readers are the princes and princesses of modern India living for the instant who are interested about precious little other than matters of their own gratification. Our readers would gladly paint their patriotism on their faces during the cricket match but would not venture into the faeces-infested underbelly to lend a hand of support.

And it is this audience that we have to cater to. We have to tell them the stories that they want to hear. In a manner that they want the facts presented. Or else we run the risk of being obsolete, of being redundant, of being anachronistic. They are interested in Kalmadi, not Kalahandi. They are interested to read about Mandira Bedi's plunging neckline and not about the advancement of the Maoists. So we shrug our shoulders and give then what they want – wasting reams on the tinsel and the frivolous, without sticking our neck out and raising the issues.

Is there no hope then? Will the menace of black money and red tape continue to corrode the basic fabric of the nation as we, the journalists, continue to view things through jaundiced eyes? Will we stand in a corner and allow the politician, industrialist, bureaucrat nexus to continue to plunder and pillage for their own vested interests? Will we allow the rich and the mighty to sacrifice our tomorrow on the altar of their profitability?

Well, can we talk later? Surely, the environment can wait till the game ends…

Observe first, and jump to conclusions later

Ranjona Banerji

Anna Hazare and his movement to get the Lokpal Bill passed through Parliament have left us with some very interesting questions to answer, not just for civil society and our political classes, but also for the media. Reactions from the fourth estate have been diverse - which is welcome - but also reactionary and alarmist which is perhaps a trifle odd.

The fervour of public involvement, it can safely be said, caught everyone off-guard. The Lokpal Bill - which attempts to create an independent body to look into allegations of corruption made against politicians - was first introduced in 1968. Since then, it has been ignored or forgotten about and hardly surprisingly, no elected government in all these years made much effort to take it much further. UPA II did, but in a watered down version where the authority had, well, little authority.

Hazare, a social activist from Maharashtra, who had his biggest hours of glory in the early years of last decade of this century, was part of a movement which drafted a citizens´ version of the Bill (Jan Lokpal) and he decided to go on a hunger strike to put pressure on the government to look at this other version.

Even 10 years ago, an elderly gentleman in a Gandhi topi on a hunger strike would not have excited anyone. So how did seemingly insignificant decision become what was touted as a massive victory for the people, with thousands taking to the streets in peaceful protests, complete with de rigueur 21st century candles?

Most obviously, the seemingly endless and pretty mind-boggling array of scams which have recently been revealed played a part. Public dissatisfaction with Indian corruption is not new but the gigantic sums of money involved in the Commonwealth Games and the 2G bandwidth allocations, coupled with the extent of political and official collusion in Mumbai´s Adarsh housing society scam were shocking even for the most cynical. The public mood, it is safe to say, was not sympathetic towards the corrupt politician.

But there was something else brewing with Twitter and Facebook playing a role in galvanising people and the great number of youth who participated in the movement. We have to go back in history for a moment. For years, the middle classes have been ignored or simply dismissed by most of the Indian media. There are enough reasons and some sound justification for this - until recently, the middle classes were small in number and even smaller in influence. It would be a very strange politician, for instance, who focused an election campaign on this section of society which according to convention is disinterested in the state of the nation and whose primary concerns were to be allowed to get on with their lives with a minimum of discomfort. And where political attention did not fall, "serious" media focus was also minimal.

But since the liberalisation of the Indian economy in 1991, a strange social revolution started brewing. Suddenly, many Indians were better off than ever before and with that economic power, there also came a voice. This new middle section of society is not the middle class of old, which had

The writer is a Mumbai-based freelance journalist. She was earlier senior editor, DNA, *and deputy resident editor,* The Times of India

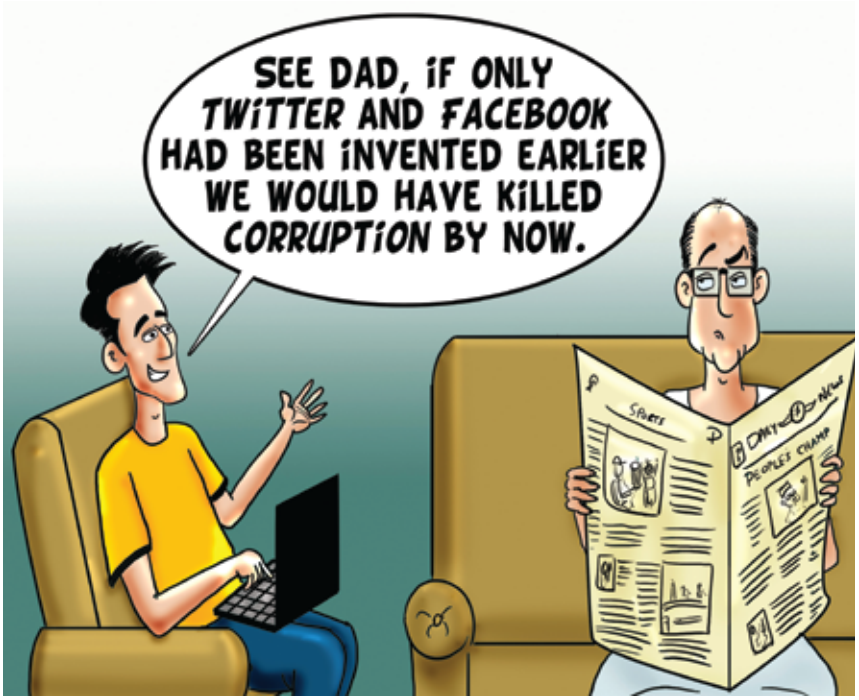


Illustration by Arun Ramkumar

played a significant driving role in movements like the freedom struggle for instance. This is a newer, hungrier section, which is free of the burdens of the past and comes with a strong sense of expectation and entitlement. It is unwilling to sit back and play the fatalism game.

India is also a young country and much as we often say this in a throwaway manner, it does have ramifications on society. It means that many treasured customs become shibboleths and it also means that respect to institutions or traditions (or even people) can no longer be demanded, it has to be earned.

It is this new India - spurred on by television news, in touch with the world through the internet - which the old guard of Indian society has to learn to deal with. And with the reaction to the Lokpal movement, some new fault-lines were exposed.

Television, as is its wont, went hysterical and behaved as if India was a totalitarian dictatorship which was looking to rid itself of its repressive rulers. A few over-enthusiastic commentators even compared the public reaction to Anna Hazare's call to the Jasmine Revolution currently sweeping North Africa and the Middle East. That comparison is a long-shot but it does not minimise what is happening here.

It cannot be doubted that the public reaction to the demand for the Lokpal Bill shocked the government into acceding to the movement's demands - after some mandatory but eventually meaningless obstinacy. TV channels, rarely known for their restraint, hailed this as a giant victory for people's power - but at least were in touch with the zeitgeist. So then began a curious counter-movement. The first was through efforts to discredit and make fun of Hazare. He was painted as either a saint or a sinner while it may be safe to say - that like so many of us - he is both and neither.

His earlier mistakes and faults were dug up and paraded as evidence that this movement was itself tainted. There was also a considerable amount of mocking public interest and contempt for the people, saying they did not even understand what the Lokpal Bill is about. It is very likely that that is true, but would it be fair to ask how many journalists have bothered about this bill since 1968?

Then started the comments about how hunger strikes were blackmail which threatened democracy. This led to exhortations from very senior commentators calling for caution, as if 1500 people carrying candles at India Gate asking for say in the drafting of a bill to nab corrupt politicians was going to create a Constitutional crisis and destroy the Indian republic. Hunger strikes have long been a part of protest and given our own history with satyagraha, perhaps a larger understanding of India's freedom struggle would be wise.

It might be crazy or contrary in all this to hazard a guess that we are entering a new phase in our republic, where participatory democracy will be more visible and will change the way political parties operate. The media has to report on it preferably without seeing the end of the world in it. While young people shouting slogans for a better India, out in Tamil Nadu traditional election politics was being played out where two parties - both with their fair share of corruption charges against them - shamelessly offered freebies to voters. Traditional commentators saw nothing odd or wrong or dangerous to democracy in this, since we have long been used to poor people being manipulated for votes by politicians.

It is impossible to say now whether this government-civil society collaboration in the Lokpal Bill will be a success. However, the media would better serve the nation if it observes first and jumps to conclusions later.

हर विपदा में किसान के साथ

किसानों के संकट की हर घड़ी में
मध्यप्रदेश सरकार उनके साथ।
फसल खराब होने पर किसानों को राहत के लिये
राजस्व पुस्तक परिपत्र में व्यापक बदलाव।
प्राकृतिक आपदाओं से प्रभावित फसलों में
राहत के लिये अभूतपूर्व फ़ैसले।

अब दो हैक्टेयर असिंचित जोत पर 50 प्रतिशत से अधिक के नुकसान पर साढ़े चार हजार रुपये प्रति हैक्टेयर और सिंचित भूमि पर साढ़े आठ हजार रुपये प्रति हैक्टेयर की दर से राहत।

नये नियम के अनुसार अब तुअर को बारहमासी फसल मानकर 50 प्रतिशत से अधिक क्षति पर ₹ 11 हजार प्रति हैक्टेयर की राहत राशि।

पान बरेजे आदि की हानि पर ₹ 25000/- प्रति हैक्टेयर तक की सहायता

क्षतिग्रस्त फसलों का उदारतापूर्वक आकलन करने के निर्देश। एक-एक खेत का सर्वे। यदि 5 एकड़ की फसल में आधा एकड़ भी खराब तो मिलेगा मुआवजा।

राजस्व पुस्तक परिपत्र में फसलों की क्षति पर राहत की राशि बढ़ी।

▼▼▼▼ किसान हित के नये निर्णय ▼▼▼▼

- अगले वित्त वर्ष से सभी किसानों को एक प्रतिशत की ब्याज दर पर फसल के लिये सहकारी ऋण।
- प्रभावित किसानों का भू-राजस्व माफ।
- ऋणों की वसूली स्थगित।
- ऋण राशि का एक वर्ष का ब्याज भी माफ।
- कर्ज राशि पर एक वर्ष की ब्याज माफी के बाद दूसरे वर्ष लगने वाली 12 प्रतिशत ब्याज दर के स्थान पर ब्याज दर 3 प्रतिशत।
- गैर लायसेंसी साहूकारों द्वारा दिये गये ऋण कानून बनाकर शून्य किये जायेंगे।
- लायसेंसी साहूकार द्वारा दिये जाने वाले ऋण पर ब्याज राशि का निर्धारण करेगी सरकार।
- पहली बार नुकसान का आकलन खेत और फसल को एक इकाई मानकर होगा।
- प्रारंभिक तौर पर राहत के लिये 500 करोड़ की व्यवस्था। जरूरी होने पर अतिरिक्त राहत राशि भी।

मध्यप्रदेश जनसंपर्क द्वारा जारी

हर कदम पर किसानों के साथ | **मध्यप्रदेश सरकार**

Fourth Estate under EC scanner: a sad commentary on the media

D. Suresh Kumar

The writer is deputy resident editor, The New Indian Express, *Bangalore, and former general secretary of the Madras Union of Journalists and ex-member, Central Press Accreditation Committee, Government of India. This article was submitted before Tamil Nadu and Puducherry went to the polls*

The watchdog is being watched. The Media Certification and Monitoring Committees has been set up by the Election Commission to keep a watch of all advertisements, political coverage and paid news during the conduct of Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry. How has this sad state of affairs come about? The media has moved away from subtle support for a candidate or party to outright sale of sacrosanct news column space and in the process, journalism has become suspect in the eyes of the Election Commission, says the writer.

Censorship is bad for the media in a democracy. In fact, media and censorship simply don't gel. It's like putting the cat and mouse in the same cage, where the liberty of the mouse is not just curtailed but it becomes live fodder for the cat. But what happens when the mouse refuses to behave? You need to set the cat out of the bag! Sadly, that's what is happening in India now, amply displayed by the conduct of the Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry.

Shaken by the disturbing and unethical culture of 'paid news' creeping in during the Maharashtra Assembly elections held in 2009, the Election Commission of India has donned the role of a censor by setting up Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC) in each district of the five poll-bound states. The MCMCs comprising the District Election Officer/Deputy District Election Officer, District Public Relations Officer, Central Government or Information and Broadcasting Ministry Official (if any) and an independent citizen or journalist recommended by the Press Council of India, would virtually put newspapers, magazines and broadcast media under censorship of a different kind.

The role of the MCMCs, as described by the Election Commission (vide Letter No. 491/Media Policy/2010 dated September 23, 2010), includes monitoring print and electronic media and to "record either in CD or DVD / keep a photocopy of all advertisements / *paid news* / election related news of the contesting candidates / political parties." Essentially, all political coverage including interviews with the candidates and political party leaders has come under the scanner of the Election Commission on a daily basis.

"The District Committee should also keep a watch on the election news/features, etc. on the electronic media in the district. When there is disproportionate coverage to the speech/activities of a candidate on television/radio channels, which is likely to influence the voters and yield election benefit to a particular candidate, and the same coverage

appears in several channels, then the candidate should be served with notices by the DEOs to explain her/his stand as to why the coverage should not be treated as advertisement, and matter should be reported to the Commission," Tapas Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Election Commission of India has said in a detailed communication to the Chief Electoral Officers of the five States that are headed for polls.

For the purpose of monitoring how the media behaves during an election season, the MCMCs are being provided with all national and local newspapers, having wide circulation in the constituency so that they can watch and record all the advertisements / discussions related to the election. Besides, three or four television sets with connections to all the local and national news channels and one recording device are placed at their disposal.

The Press Council of India, which probed the menace of paid news, had in its report described that "any news or analysis appearing in any media (print and electronic) for a price in cash or kind as consideration," shall be classified as paid news. Since the Council by virtue of not enjoying any judicial power was incapable of going beyond identifying paid news as a menace, the Election Commission has now taken upon itself the mantle of fixing accountability. Again, this accountability is merely confined to fixing the expenditure incurred by a candidate in getting news published by paying for it, and is inadequate to make the media a responsible player during election time in the world's largest democracy.

It is a matter of serious concern that the media, instead of being an active partner in rooting out corruption from elections and striving to restore grassroots democracy, is engaged in an ugly mission to increase its revenue generation by subverting the provisions of the Representation of People Act. Such is the subversion that sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish genuine election coverage from paid news.

In fact, the Election Commission itself has acknowledged that surrogate advertisements and paid news are difficult to account for as candidates and political parties will never report about it. To check this, the Election Commission has said: "The systems should be robust enough to catch such expenditure as well, and not only include it in the account of election expenditure, but also take action against the wrongdoers under the relevant provisions of the law, including lodging of complaints before the police/ competent magistrate, if required." The Election Commission had instructed District Election Offices to maintain a Shadow Observation Register to make a note of the surrogate advertisements and paid news.

It's a misnomer to believe that paid election coverage came into existence during the 2009 Maharashtra Assembly elections. The plague had set in much earlier in Tamil Nadu during the 2006 Assembly elections, albeit on a much lesser scale and in a veiled manner.

Journalists of a Tamil evening newspaper had confided to their colleagues in other media organisations at that time that they were instructed by their advertorial bosses to report a Dalit political party leader's speeches and statements in full. The reason was obvious: the Dalit leader had promised huge advertisements to the daily as a quid pro quo.

Then of course, from time immemorial, newspapers have always lent tacit support to political parties of their choice so that they can reap the benefits in the form of government advertisements for five years when the party is voted to power. Shockingly, the media has been so emboldened that it has moved away from subtle support for a candidate or party to a brazen strategy of outright sale of the sacrosanct news column space. In the process, journalism has become suspect in the eyes of the Election Commission.

It is disgusting that media ethics have fallen to such low levels that the Election Commission has chosen to treat news, which per se appears to be reported for a consideration, as "any other document" distributed for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of a candidate or group of candidates under Section 127A (1) of the Representation of People Act. This means that the otherwise 'sacred news' (comment is free), is liable to included in the category of an 'election pamphlet and poster.'

The Election Commission has said that "an obvious case of news reporting in the print media dedicated/giving advantage to a particular candidate or the party while ignoring/causing prejudice to other candidates and parties would require investigation."

The last word needs to be noted – "investigation." In the place of investigative journalism, which was once the hallmark of the Fourth Estate in India, we now have journalism being liable for "investigation" by an external authority – the Election Commission. Today, the watchdog called media is under the watchful eyes of the Election Commission. This is, to say the least, a very sad commentary on the media in India. It's time for the Indian media to indulge in some self-introspection and act in a professional manner upholding the highest standards of ethics in journalism so that in the future the Election Commission ceases to play the role of a censor.

Media has tasted the fruits of 'paid news'

Paid media is a dangerous phenomenon threatening the integrity of democracy in India, says T.S. Krishnamurthy, the former chief election commissioner. According to him, some journalists are falling prey to temptation and making money on the sly. In a country which was once proud of its values, where leaders sacrificed their lives for freedom, it is an unfortunate occurrence, he says, and calls for speedy action to remedy the ills. He was addressing members of the Public Relations Society of India's Chennai Chapter some months ago, but his views assume importance especially in the context of elections having taken place recently in a few states in India.

T.S. Krishnamurthy addressing members of the Public Relations Society of India, Chennai Chapter.

Sashi Nair

Paid media in the present political scenario would almost seem like a topical subject, having gained a lot of importance in recent times. Much has been written about it and debates have raged about what constitutes 'paid news'. Bringing some clarity on the subject was none other than T.S. Krishnamurthy, the former chief election commissioner of India who retired after spending 36 years in the civil service. The first revenue officer from the Indian Revenue Service to become secretary to the Department of Company Affairs, Krishnamurthy was appointed election commissioner in 2000. Between February 2004 and May 2005, he was chief election commissioner.

"'Paid news' itself is a misnomer, because all news is paid for – by management, by shareholders of a company who own it, or subscribers to newspapers and television channels. Whatever it is, this particular expression has gathered momentum in recent times to mean it is paid for clandestinely, more to masquerade as news, and the person who pays the money may be visible or invisible. It is prevalent all over the world in a different garb," said Krishnamurthy, giving the example of lobbyists

The writer is the editor of Vidura

abroad who lobby through media for their own particular interests.

Addressing members of the Public Relations Society of India, Chennai Chapter, Krishnamurthy made the point that in India, paid news had a special connotation because there was a ceiling on the expenditure of candidates. The objective was to ensure that a person who spent money on getting elected did not have undue advantage over an opponent who was not affluent, according to him. He added that to offer a level playing field, the Election Commission, under the Representation of People's Act, had been prescribing ceilings. "The history of ceiling on expenditure has gone through rough weather; it has varied depending on inflationary conditions. The law provides many loopholes," said Krishnamurthy, adding that there was no ceiling on the expenditure of political parties and expenditure incurred by associates and friends was not included in the ceiling.

To improve matters, to plug loopholes, the government brought about an amendment but it brought a fresh set of problems, according to Krishnamurthy. For instance, there was no limit on the number of party leaders who could canvass for a candidate. This was brought to the notice of the government, he added, and lauded the media for playing a significant role in bringing to light various ills plaguing the election system.

Degeneration over the years

Krishnamurthy referred to the post-Independence period and to India's Constitution – the longest written one – that was framed to nurture, protect and preserve democracy in the country. He spoke about India's first general election, in 1951-52, when there were only newspapers and radio and candidates reached out to voters through posters and at public meetings. Krishnamurthy estimated that there were 50000 television channels across the country run by different cable operators. "It is just impossible to regulate all of them," he said and referred to persons owning television channels being associated with political parties. "They were merrily carrying programmes that had subtle political advertising," he said, recalling his experience. It was thus a clear infringement of the Election Commission rule that no political advertisement be carried on electronic media. He mentioned a Tamil channel telecasting a mythological story that had political overtones.

Krishnamurthy said that it was the duty of the district election officer to regulate advertisements of political parties by getting them screened and cleared by the local constituency committee. Such a proposal sent by the Election Commission to the Supreme Court was indeed approved by the latter and was supposed to be in operation. However, on the ground, it did not make a major difference because there were a number of serial programmes that could not be regulated, although to some extent it arrested the misuse of media.

In the 2004 elections, the aspect of 'biased media' became more pronounced, Krishnamurthy said. He pointed to a feature in India's leading weekly magazine called Impact that consisted of paid news – paid for by the government or state. "The payment would be made after the elections. It acquired new heights in the 2009 elections and subsequent by-elections." Media was once considered the fourth pillar of democracy and twenty or thirty years ago journalists took pride in being independent or neutral, though there were occasional offenders, Krishnamurthy said, and added that during the Emergency the media played a significant role and asserted its authority. Two or three newspapers even blanked out editorials to send a silent message to the government, that curbing the freedom of the press was not appreciated. Press freedom was thus "jealously and zealously" guarded by the journalist and the media. It was, according to former chief election commissioner, "the best period for media in India".

"Over the years journalists got tempted by certain developments. Not only were journalists making money on the sly, there was also management and corporate lobbying. They started contacting political candidates. Payment was very often clandestinely made to individual journalists, or made in kind. The media has tasted the fruits of paid news," said Krishnamurthy and gave the example of a Bombay-based newspaper that did not disclose information sought by the Election Commission. "They have started systematically exploiting the loopholes. It's a pity that this development is undermining democracy. In a country which was so much proud of its values, where so many leaders sacrificed their lives for freedom, it is unfortunate. This has become popular because there has been a media boom, high growth of literacy, influence of print and electronic media, and the price for paid news is becoming more and more attractive"

A challenge for democracy

At the time of conducting elections, the media plays a very important role in disseminating information about candidates, about political parties, manifestos and arrangements made for the conduct of elections. "The Code of Conduct for political parties (remains in force from the announcement of elections to the announcement of results) is not law but an agreed method to provide a level playing field, in particular to arrest the tendency of the ruling party to influence

elections," said Krishnamurthy.

In 2004, which was known as the E-election thanks to the use of electronic voting machines, all forms of media were used, every known method of communication was exploited, he said, and added that he had not quite seen the kind of political activity displayed in India, in countries he had visited – Mexico, Russia, the US and African countries. "Even in Zimbabwe, there is a restriction on the size of posters. We thought of bringing the rule here, but met with opposition," he said. In Mexico, candidates reached out to voters through television and small posters. In the US, television played an important part, though not to the extent it did in India.

"Channels here are becoming a law unto themselves," Krishnamurthy said, pointing to the kind of media biases – innocent biases (ignorance), informed biases (certain information is deliberately fed through journalists or government), and influenced biases (people in remote areas being easily swayed), which he termed "most dangerous". Over a period, such misrepresentations began to take an important role and influenced the minds of voters. Even corporate houses were willing to support the trend, he said. Wrapping up his speech, Krishnamurthy said paid media was a dangerous phenomenon threatening the integrity of democracy. "Media can play a constructive role during elections to enhance the quality of democracy in this country.

Unfortunately, in the last few years under the influence of globalisation, media seems to have degenerated, undermining the quality of democracy," he said.

Although one suggestion was to make paid news an electoral fraud, a misdemeanour, a legal provision might not be effective, Krishnamurthy said. "It will take five to ten years to arrive at some finality; especially in the case of paid media, it is very difficult to substantiate the truth.

Very often the payment part is camouflaged, unless you can prove by circumstantial evidence."

Krishnamurthy wondered whether it would be possible to provide more teeth to the Press Council. "Self-regulation is desirable for media but I find in this country self-regulation does not take off easily because each person has his defence. The sooner we take steps to stop this (paid news), the better it is for our democracy," he said and urged a few voluntary organisations to support independent journalists with recognition for displaying integrity in presenting news. He named the government, the press and the public as stakeholders in the exercise to purge the system of corruption.

'EDUCATION FOR ALL'

is still a distant dream!

Annual Subscription Rs. 180

Get to know the real face of India. Subscribe today!

PRESS INSTITUTE of INDIA

GRASSROOTS

RIND Premises Second Main Road, Taramani CPT Campus, Chennai - 600 113 Ph: 044 2254 2344 Fax: 044 2254 2323

murali@pressinstitute.in editor@pressinstitute.in

What can be done to get rid of the scourge?

Nava Thakuria

There are specific allegations that many journalists in Guwahati, who are among the lowest paid in India with starting salaries as low as Rs 2500 a month, enjoy regular payments such as monthly lump-sums from politicians in power.

Licenses for wine shops are offered to reporters (and accepted happily by many) with the inherent understanding that the latter will write only positive stories and, if possible, kill negative reports against the politicians.

Speaking to this writer, Hiten Mahanta, a Guwahati-based media observer, says many regional newspapers in North East India sell favourable reporting for extra income. "You can find a number of examples in Guwahati, where proprietors of media houses havde misused media space for individual benefit. It is amazing how some newspapers, and also news channels, change their point of view towards a politician or party suddenly after receiving money," he says.

Newspapers in Assam still maintain ethical values as far as editorial space is concerned, space that until now is not being utilised visibly for earning extra money, say observers. But how long such ethics will remain is anybody's guess.

'Paid news' is not a new occurrence and has been in practice, unofficially if you will, for many years. It is only in recent times though that a large number of influential media persons and organisations have expressed concern at this growing trend in the country. The concern is more about misuse of non-advertorial space.

Offering an envelope to a reporter has become commonplace, and is prevalent across Asia. What is disturbing is that the practice seems to have become institutionalised, moving from reporter to publisher. There is an allegation against many media houses in India that, irrespective of the volumes of business, they have started selling news space after coming to an understanding with politicians and corporate houses. These items are not even disguised as advertisements.

Addressing a distinguished gathering in Agartala on December 26, 2010, at a meeting organised by the Tripura Journalists' Union at the Agartala Press Club, Press Council Chairman and retired Supreme Court judge Justice G.N. Roy, said that the media in India had "terribly deviated from its aims and objectives".

He added that some media groups had emerged as brand ambassadors of corporate houses or of certain political parties, unethical in a democratic society, and that running a media house should not be considered only a profit-earning proposition.

The PCI, a quasi-judicial body, had established a special committee

The writer is a freelance journalist based in Assam

Illustration by Chandrakala

to examine violations of the journalistic code of fair and objective reporting.

The Press Council acknowledged that a section of the Indian media had 'indulged in monetary deals with some politicians and candidates by publishing their views as news items and bringing out negative news items against rival candidates' during the last elections.

A member of the Press Council of India investigative committee, Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, had said in an interview that the committee had received many complains from journalists that a large number of newspapers and television channels (in various languages) had been receiving money to provide news space (even editorials) for the benefit of politicians.

Speaking to this writer from New Delhi, Thakurta said paid news clearly violated the guidelines of the Election Commission of India, which had made restrictions in the expenditure incurred by a candidate for contesting the Legislative Assembly or Parliamentary elections. "Amazingly, we have found that some newspapers had even prepared rate cards for candidates in the last few elections.

There are different rates for positive news coverage, interviews, editorials and also putting out damaging reports against opponents," Thakurta pointed out.The issue has caught the attention of the Editors' Guild of India and the Indian Editors' Forum.

The latter had sent a letter to all editors seeking a pledge that the publication or TV channel would not carry any 'paid news' as the practice 'violates and undermines the principles of free and fair journalism'.

The aspect of paid news was initially brought to the fore by veteran journalists such as Prabhash Joshi and B.G. Verghese, and P Sainath, Rural Affairs Editor, *The Hindu.*

Sainath warned that the 'corporatisation' of the media world threatened the existence of free media. "The proprietors now grant space for vivid coverage for the benefit of their 'friendly politicians' in the newspapers," he said, adding, "Furthermore, to entertain their growing demands, many media groups have even gone for arranging extra space (during election periods). Let's finish the culture of paid news; otherwise it will finish us in the coming days."

Rajdeep Sardesai, editor-in-chief, CNN-IBN television news channel, and former president of the Editors' Guild said he was "deeply shocked and seriously concerned at the increasing number of reports detailing the pernicious practice of publishing paid news by some newspapers and television channels, especially during the recent elections" "We strongly believe that the practice of putting out advertising as news is a grave journalistic malpractice. Moreover, the trend threatens the foundation of journalism by eroding public faith in the credibility and impartiality of news reporting. It also vitiates the poll process and prevents a fair election, richer candidates who can pay for publicity have a clear advantage."

He added: "Media houses should distinguish advertisements with full and proper disclosure norms so that no reader and viewer is tricked by any subterfuge of advertisements published and broadcast in the same format, language and style of news."

आपकी सरकार आयेगी आपके पास

“अंत्योदय मेले”

प्रदेश सरकार का अभिनव प्रयास।
पूरे प्रदेश में जिला स्तर पर आयोजित अंत्योदय मेलों में
लोगों से रूबरू होंगे मंत्री एवं विभागों के अधिकारी।
मौके पर ही मिलेगा विभिन्न योजनाओं के हितग्राहियों को लाभ।

प्रदेश सरकार ने अपना विकास पथ प्रदेश के लोगों को केन्द्र में रखकर बनाया है। अब आवश्यक यह है कि उनके हित में बनी योजनाओं का शतप्रतिशत लाभ उन तक पहुँचे।

अंत्योदय मेलों का आयोजन आमजनों के करीब पहुँच कर शासन की जनकल्याणकारी योजनाओं का लाभ उन तक पहुँचाने का एक प्रयास है।

मैं उम्मीद करता हूँ कि पूरे प्रदेश में लोग इन मेलों में सहभागी बनकर इस प्रयास को सफल बनायेंगे।

शिवराज सिंह चौहान
मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

गरीबों के साथ मध्यप्रदेश सरकार

170 योजनाएं, लाएंगी जीवन में मुस्कान।

मध्यप्रदेश जनसम्पर्क द्वारा जारी

आकल्पना : म.प्र. माध्यम/2011

AN UNSYMPATHETIC MEDIA

A shot of the opening ceremony at the recently held Commonwealth Games in New Delhi.

S. Muthiah

With more than 60 years in journalism, the writer is editor, Madras Musings, *and author of several books on Chennai as well as corporate / institution biographies. He is also a columnist for* The Hindu

The other day, one of Chennai's 'think-tanks' hosted a discussion on whether India should make a bid for the Olympics 2020. Leading the discussion was a senior sports journalist who had been at the Commonwealth Games. And a very fair presentation he made to kick off the discussion in a group which, to the best of my knowledge, included no one who had anything to do with sport expect yours truly who had participated in, and reported on, sport in two countries over a period of nearly 25 years. In the circumstances, given the composition of the group, the politics of sport and the corruption that is involved in and around it, particularly as headlined in the last few weeks on either side of the Commonwealth Games, took centre stage. Sport - and the achievements of the Indian sportspersons in Delhi – took a distant second place. And that is what happened in the run-up to and after the Games. Only reflecting the media's approach to all that happened before, during and after the Commonwealth Games.

Let us take what the media's approach was before the Games. Work on the Games' venues and facilities and infrastructure in Delhi had been

going for at least two or three years now, if not more. Was the progress of work even at the sports venues and facilities monitored on a regular basis during that period by the media? Not that I have heard of. Then, suddenly, the media discovered the Games were upon Delhi. 'Discovered' is the only word, given the virtual silence that had preceded it. When Delhi hoardings said '500 days more for the Games', who in the media said 'X, Y or Z was 300 days behind schedule'?

When the great discovery was made, the emphasis was not on the state of the venues and the facilities and whether they looked adequate or were substandard, it was merely on repeating that they would not be ready for the Games and, in even more strident voices, that they were really monuments to corruption. The tenor of those voices was as though corruption had just been discovered in India – and if there had been no corruption, all would be fine at the Games. The speaker I listened to the other day was realist enough – even if he might not express it in his paper – to say that corruption existed in every country in sport and to a greater degree in such international events. In most countries they call this "transactional fees" and do not say a word about it; countries like ours scream blue murder while knowing fall well that there is corruption at every level in the land. The question really is about the quantum. In the recent games it has been estimated that money that has a cloud over it is likely to be about 30 per cent of the amount spent on the facilities alone, not taking into consideration urban infrastructure. If it had been five or ten per cent – which would still be sizeable sums - would the media have been screaming itself hoarse instead of looking at what was being got for it? The speaker the other day said the stadiums were excellent, a couple of them amongst the best in the world. I have read nothing about those facilities in any detail or found as much space given to them as to corruption, lapses and delays. Did not their quality warrant greater attention from the media?

Going beyond corruption, what a song and dance there was about broken toilets, water on floors, dirty bed linen and falling bridges. All this in less than a month. But did anyone stop to ask how much, or how little, of the facilities were in this shape? I find it hard to believe that if this reflected the state of the **whole** village, it could have been made a world class village – as some I have met who have been there stated it was and as most of the visiting sportspersons felt it was when they moved in – **in a matter of days.** If, as was likely, much of the village was in good shape and only bits of it were as reported, was that fair comment? And as for construction accidents, I wonder how many have taken place in venues around the world hosting international games? Did we see no headlines in our media because there were none or was it because the media in the host countries were not creating the hullabaloo we did?

This is not to say the corrupt should not be brought to book, that heads should not roll, that delays should not be penalised, that substandard work should not be punished. I would be delighted if all that did happen – because it would mean that at last we are being different from what we have so long been. But somehow I think we are not going to be different – and I rather feel all those screaming themselves hoarse are likely to agree. But that is neither here nor there. What concerns me is that with the media's preoccupation with this state of affairs – and I find of at least one newspaper daily devoting about a quarter of its space for Sport to this kind of follow-up on the Games – not enough attention is being paid to the achievers on the sports fields and in and beyond the arenas. And that lack of attention – an attention that is still lavished on cricketers after all these sporting achievements in Delhi – is why other sports are not producing participants and talent in the same numbers as cricket is doing. What is in it for me, is what the young ask if the choice is between cricket and another sport. Those who take to other sports, take to them despite the lack of rewards or, worse, recognition.

After the hoopla over the performances of India's sportsperson during the games, the reviews have hardly been kind, be it to the performers or the splendid organisation of events or the success the Games were. All reviews of the Games start off with recaps of those horror stories that appeared ad nauseam before the Games and conclude with the thought that we were lucky that all ended well. I was delighted to hear the speaker the other day say that the way the events were conducted during the Games was something we should be proud of and demonstrated we could successfully run an Olympic Games. But why is not the media shouting this as loud as its earlier condemnations? As for the players, over and over again we keep hearing about how several from abroad did not turn up for the Games and that is why we picked up medals in several events. Surely we did not have anyone to take on Usain Bolt or Asha Powell or those champion divers and cyclists who did not turn up from Australia and New Zealand? Where we did have medalists, they competed virtually against the best from other countries in these events. Why have sports journalists not examined these performances with the same eye for detail they had for missing athletes and dirty bed sheets and toilets? Little attention has been paid by the media to the contribution of Government to the

While cricket gets more then its fair share of publicity, athletics, for example, hardly gets enough coverage.

success India's sportspersons at the Games. In fact, what little has been said on that count has been guilty of damning by faint praise. While tens of thousands of crore rupees were spent on facilities for the Games and the infrastructure Delhi needed to hold the Games, less than Rs.1000 crore, in fact around Rs.675 crore, was spent on training the sportspersons. Yet this amount, measly in comparison with the rest of the expenditure, is being repeatedly emphasised by the media as a huge sum when in fact much more needed to be spent, particularly on the less successful sports. Even less noticed by the media is the Sports Ministry special cell that administered this money and Joint Secretary Rahul Bhatnagar and his team in the cell who ensured, by scrupulous monitoring, that every rupee was well spent. Surely achievements like these by the babus and others in charge of sports in States like Haryana, Punjab, Kerala and Manipur need to be highlighted as models for other States to follow and not be treated as worthy of just passing mention while the glare of the spotlights is kept on the negative features of the Games? Sports journalists did a commendable job of focusing on the sportspersons during the Games, but little attention was paid to them before the event – and not much more after the events. Cricket now is back to occupying the bulk of the space – even if it is only its stars limbering up.

If India is to make greater strides in sports, it is time the media began playing a greater role – and a fairer one to all sports beyond the cricket field. It is time the same passion for exposing corruption is shown in pushing the Central and State Governments to improve sports facilities and training at all levels by putting more money into these. Equally, the media needs to pay greater attention to the participants and their achievements and how they got there. Surely, if virtually ball-by-ball descriptions of a cricket match could be given to fill half a page, a detailed description of around 200 or so words could have been given to that Gold-winning 4x 400m women's relay team instead of just stating they surprised everyone and won and the team comprised of so and so running such and such a lap?

I got into sports journalism in middling towns in the U.S. where the matches of local high school and college teams, whatever the sport was, got as much descriptive coverage as national events. Local stars were as well known in the town as national players, encouraging them to try for higher honours. I took the habit to other climes closer home, describing school and club matches in several sports. And it was a pleasure to watch participation grow. Sports reporting, to me is giving every participant his space before, during and after a game, as cricketers get in India, not muckraking unless it involves the players themselves. Muckraking beyond the sports field, as in the Commonwealth Games, should be left to political reporters and others on the relevant beats. Sports journalists should be concentrating on the players. But even with the Asian Games round the corner there is no media enthusiasm for the competitors. Does the media think no one is interested in them, that all we are interested in is cricket?

Looked at against this background, bidding for the Olympics might not be the wisest thing in the world. But India, if it is to be a nation fit for the world stage, would need to stage the Olympics. It could successfully do so only if the media monitors the progress of infrastructure for the Games from Day One of a successful bid and pays as great attention to the likely Indian competitors, in whatever discipline, from at least four years before the events.

That we can organise and run on the field a major competition we have shown. It is inspiring the participants and ensuring excellent facilities well in time that are the need. And a watchdog role by the media can go a long way towards making these possible - and ensuring even a successful Olympics.

Have newspapers lost their sting?

From newspapers of record, critics of the establishment and influencers of policymaking, newspapers today seems to have lost some of that power, says ***Ravindra Dubey,*** *freelance journalist and visiting professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Delhi and Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi, and* ***K. Tiwari,*** *senior lecturer, Kasturi Ram College of Higher Education.*

The euphoria of gaining freedom on the midnight of August 15, 1947 took a long time to die down. Those were the days (1947-67) when five newspapers dominated the Indian media scene. *The Times of India,* 'the old lady of Borobudur', topped the list. The Delhi-based *Hindustan Times* was next followed by the rapidly expanding chain of editions of *The Indian Express. The Statesman* controlled the east and *The Hindu* had its monopoly in the south. They considered themselves newspapers of record and partners in government. Their objective was just to help the government take the right decisions to steer the country in the right direction. Those were the days when editorial writers kept themselves busy talking about how India should deal with China,m or whether the PM did the right thing by recalling V.K. Krishna Menon. These newspapers produced some outstanding personalities. Such as Frank Moraes, who started working immediately after his return from Oxford. A product of this university was Dosu Karaka. Then there was Mulgaonkar, credited with a razor sharp mind, as was N.J. Nanporia. These editors rarely left their cabins for the newsroom; gathering news was left to newcomers like reporters. Editorials and edit page articles advised the government. Around 1968, journalists began to feel the need for a change in their relationship with the government. Pandit Nehru had passed away in 1964 but leading editors had developed good contacts with important Congress leaders in various states. Indira Gandhi's indifferent attitude towards the press added insult to injury as she had no time for the wordsmiths. Until 1969, when she divided the Congress and dissociated herself from the Syndicate, she had no opposition. But when she nationalised banks, got the official Presidential candidate Sanjiva Reddy defeated and cancelled privy purses of princely states, the press thought enough was enough and decided to take on her openly.

The Indian Express Editor Frank Moraes led the charge. Other editors followed suit. Khushwant Singh, editor of *The Illustrated weekly of India,* while mocking Indira's leftist populism, termed her responsible for leading the country to ruin. The dailies also published a pre-election survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion, which predicted a Congress defeat.

Indira Gandhi won the elections. The same year she won a war against Pakistan. Many editors changed tune but she never forgave them. Indeed, she dealt ruthlessly with her critics. Just before Bangladesh war, Dosu Karaka wrote in *Current* that he had seen

Sikhs in Muktivahini. He was right. Most of the Bangladeshi guerillas were Indian soldiers. Indira did not accept this fact. So Karaka was arrested and jailed for five days. Very few of his friends in the media registered their protest.

Indira Gandhi now concentrated on dealing with those in the press who were at some point close to her. B.G. Verghese, her former press advisor, later became the editor of *The Hindustan Times.* With the passage of time, he had become one of her vehement critics. He wrote that Indira's accession of Sikkim was unethical. This was the last straw. Right words were whispered in Birla's ears and Verghese became jobless. The press received another jolt when Indira Gandhi converted All India Radio into the most important source of news and then used it for political advantage. During the 1969 Congress split, most of India believed that some corrupt and older people were hounding Indira Gandhi who was a saintly woman. But she was showing the press that she did not need them.

When there were so many indications, journalists should have been ready for June 25, 1975, but they weren't. When the moment of truth came, many of them were literally groping in the dark, as electricity to newspaper offices on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi's Fleet Street then, was cut off. Between July 1975 and January 1977, the police shut down 34 printing presses and arrested 7000 persons on the charge of printing and distributing clandestine anti-government literature. It was the Emergency that led to the decline of the top five newspapers. The readers began to distrust them. The common belief was that they did not play their role properly. The previous image was never restored. Significantly, the Emergency created a hunger for news stories that went beyond official statements, to see what was actually happening. And then a new crop of newsmagazines emerged to fill the vacuum created by the decline of the top newspapers. Thus were born *Sunday* and *India Today,* both had good circulation. *Sunday* published several cover stories of human rights violations.

Arun Shourie took over as executive editor of *The Indian Express* on January 1, 1979, a milestone in the history of Indian journalism. Owner Ramnath Goenka gave him a free hand. Interestingly, Shourie was not a journalist, but a trained economist who had worked with the World Bank from 1967 to 1978 and had also been advisor to the Planning Commission from 1972 to 1974. Shourie sent his reporters to find out the stories behind official statements as he felt that it was no use carrying plain statements in India where injustice was rampant.

The Bhagalapur blinding was the first scoop – what happened to Umesh Yadav of Mayaganj in Bhagalpur and other 32 undertrials? It was a spine-chilling story of the jail staff in Bhagalpur prison finding a novel way of providing justice, by gouging out the eyes of undertrials and pouring acid into the sockets.

The Kamala episode saw *Express* reporter Ashwini Sarin buying a woman from the Chambal area in Madhya Pradesh for Rs 2200, then the price of a buffalo.

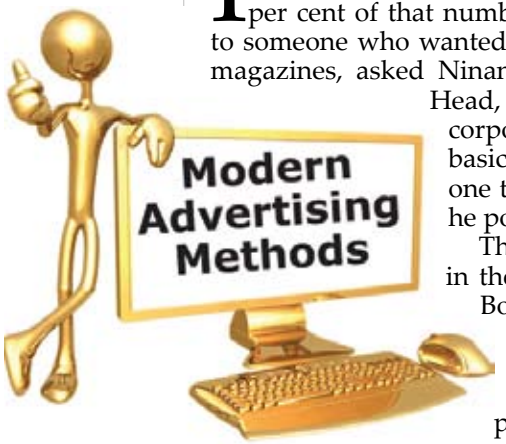
He had visited the area during the 1980 parliamentary elections when he learnt about such goings-on. Then, a story that led the Congress chief minister of Maharashtra A.R. Antulay to lose his job. He had amassed wealth in half a dozen trusts he owned, misusing his official position. Following a court verdict against him, he quit. Shourie must also be credited for exposing the Kuo Oil deal. As a result of all this, newspapers grew stronger and some journalists acquired star status. The political situation changed after Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984 and Rajiv Gandhi took over the reins of the country. The Express and The Hindu broke the Bofors story, one which continues to appear in the news even today. In 1986, Pritish Nandy took over as editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and the magazine also broke some stories. Investigative journalism was having a regional impact as well. In many states, scribes exposed scandals and scams. For instance, in Madhya Pradesh, police in Chhatarpur tortured an innocent by administering electric shock to his genitals. It became a cover story for *Sunday,* and a little known journalist bagged the first prize from People's Union for Civil Liberties. Indeed, investigative journalism gave sleepless nights to the heads of many state governments. In 1982, Bihar CM Jagannath Mishra brought a draconian bill that empowered police to arrest any journalist from any part of the country. The Press of whole country went hammer and tongs against the bill called Bihar Press Bill and he had to withdraw it. It was *Sunday* that took the lead.

When P.V. Narsimha Rao became the Prime Minister in 1991, he liberalised India's economy. The newspaper turned commercial product as consumerism got a boost. Business became important and investigative journalism was all but over. In early 2001, tehelka.com exposed the corruption prevailing in defence deals and now television channels began to resort to sting operations, using the hidden camera. It helped in raising their TRPs, too.

Today, with consumerism and business leading the way, the media seems to have lost its sting and even forgotten its role as the fourth pillar of democracy.

Media and advertising grapple with constantly changing roles

If you have not planned your strategies well, Internet can be a threat, says Ninan Thariyan, asst vice president and Times Response head, The Times of India *Group, speaking for printed media. It is not media vs media; it is media vs other options such as jogging, yoga, temple or church, he points out. PR today is much a business as advertising is, says Vijay Xavier, vice president, Lowe Lintas Worldwide. He rues the lack of coordination between various specialists handling a brand. They were speaking to a group of PR and corporate communication managers in Chennai.*



In India, the print media is a social differentiator for, unlike in other countries, only 34 per cent of Indians are exposed to it, and only 5 per cent of that number to English newspapers. What did this mean to someone who wanted to communicate to readers of newspapers and magazines, asked Ninan Thariyan, Asst Vice President and Response Head, The Times of India Group, to a group of PR and corporate communication managers in Chennai. It basically boiled down to having two classes of people: one that read a newspaper and the other that didn't, he pointed outs.

Thariyan, with over two decades of experience in the media and innings with The Times Group in Bombay, Poona and Ahmedabad, pointed out that there was a difference with television audience, which need not necessarily be literate. Also, while television was an active medium (with a passive audience), the newspaper (passive) had an active audience.

Drawing another classification, he said that there were people who voted in elections who need not be literate; people who swung votes, who read a newspaper and were well informed; and people who ran the country, including business leaders.

Ninan Thariyan.

The fact that there was a large number of people learning to be literate was one of the reasons print media in India was still thriving, Thariyan said. He drew a comparison with the Western world where newspapers such as *The New York Times, Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* were going through a very bad phase because readers had moved on to

the Internet or electronic media.

"If you have not planned your strategies well, Internet could be a threat. Here, literacy levels are still low, there is huge scope for growth, and that is why most newspapers are gaining circulation yearly. India is one country where the newspaper is almost free," Thariyan said, comparing the average cost of a newspaper in India (Rs 2) to that in Sri Lanka (Rs 14), Bangladesh (Rs 18), Pakistan (Rs 20) and London (Rs 40) in rupee terms. "Ideally, a newspaper should cost the same as a Lux soap, Rs 10 or so," he said, adding, "Readers don't realise that it costs Rs 10-12 to produce a newspaper."

In the Times of India Group, Thariyan said circulation revenue accounted for only about 7 per cent of total revenue; 93 per cent came from advertising. "The more you are dependent on circulation, the more dangerous for you. So we are heavily dependent on advertising," he said.

Thariyan pointed out that newspapers were becoming more and more carriers of advertising messages than of news.

"The role of the newspaper is constantly changing. In a democratic country like India newspapers play a vital role. We have to find new methods of providing information and make it a viable proposition." Indeed, newspapers started as an advertising vehicle, carrying shipping news mainly.

When Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead, the news was not carried on page one – the front page had advertisements, he said. This was the situation until the 1950s.

"We are access points for advertisers; the characteristics are credibility and accessibility. A newspaper is the most perishable commodity; the product lives only for 15-30 minutes. While the brand is constant, the product changes everyday." Providing the example of a variety of coffee available (6000 versions, according to him), Thariyan said today's consumer was very confused. "It'll take 16-and-a-half years to try all of them (coffee), if you drink one a day. That is what the world has come to.

The day is still 24 hours only. Our competition is 16 hours of wakefulness, because you have the option of doing something else – of still not reading a newspaper and being informed. That's our biggest challenge.

A bowling alley is my challenge, a movie is, the World Cup football is; they all take away my reading time. There's a time squeeze. Choice is expanding. It's a bad combination," he said.

Talking about 'enlightened anxiety' that consumers suffered from, Thariyan said today's children did not like to do one thing at a time.

"It is not media vs media. It is media vs jogging, yoga, temple or church.

We are looking at readers' needs, not breaking news," he said, recalling his childhood days in a Kerala village when the newspaper was the only window to the world.

"Today we are not in the updating business, TV and Internet are. We have to demystify – that is our role. The newspaper has become a 'viewspaper'. Even the flight boarding pass has become a medium today.

Medium is ATM – any time media; but non-intrusive. People don't want only info, they want entertainment. They are constantly engaged with some brand or the other throughout the day," Thariyan said.

Vijay Xavier, Vice President, Lowe Lintas Worldwide, with 37 years of experience in advertising, dwelt on how PR had changed over the years – from being a part of the advertising business to an independent business. "The fundamental definition of

Viyay Xavier.

advertisement vs publicity has changed today.

Earlier, while advertising was paid communication, PR was free publicity. PR today is much a business as advertising is. There were no PR managers or agencies earler," Xavier said, stating that for years he was the only point of contact for all brand-related activity.

So, while Xavier at one time handled creative, PR, media strategy, event management, digital, customer relationship management, direct marketing and rural marketing, today each segment had a specialist. But there was lack of coordination and the brand value was somehow not carried through, he added. "Lack of communication can kill the core of a brand."

Referring to B2B (business-to-business) clients who spent huge amounts on communication, Xavier said they did not necessarily have to spend on above-the-line activity.

He was convinced that PR could have a diabolic effect on returns if done brilliantly and that the right kind of publicity had to be identified.

Reporters can now deliver by using simple tools

A writer, trainer and consultant on media and technology issues, ***Jeremy Wagstaff*** *appears every week on the BBC World Service Radio's Business Daily and on Radio Australia. He has worked for Reuters and* The Wall Street Journal *(he was page one editor) and reported exhaustively on Asian affairs. Wagstaff trains students and professionals in areas such as new media, converged newsrooms, technology, blogging and reporting basics. While in Bangalore recently to conduct a WAN-IFRA workshop on social media and web reporting techniques, he took time off to respond to a few questions* ***Sashi Nair*** *had for him.*

Jeremy Wagstaff.

More than his fascinating experiences that point to what a rewarding career journalism can be, it's Wagstaff's description about how journalists on the ground today can use technology to good effect and derive satisfaction that makes for compelling reading.

From the Burmese uprising of 1988 to the Thai revolution of 1992 and to the Taliban's rise in 1996, you have been on the ground reporting events, and from Indonesia as well. Can you, from a reporter's perspective, comment on some of your experiences?

I was very lucky. I had pretty much given up getting a reporting job in Thailand in 1988 when, using back issues of *The Nation* to pack up my books, I found an ad for a Reuters reporter. I stumbled through the language part of the interview and never looked back. Those were the days when being in Phnom Penh, Hanoi or Vientiane meant being out of contact with pretty much the world; my best friends there were Hungarian and Czechoslovak diplomats, lost in the twilight world at the rump of the Soviet empire. Indonesia was similarly exotic under Suharto; foreign journalists weren't popular, especially if we wrote about East Timor, so of course we spent a lot of time doing just that. Covering a rare Dili protest in 1995, I confronted a policeman who barred my way; I was so enraged because I'd twisted my ankle climbing over garden fences to avoid the roadblocks his colleagues had set up, instead of cowing at his raised rifle, I yelled "I'm a journalist!" in his face. I think we were both equally surprised

Wagstaff out in the field during one of his assignments in Southeast Asia.

by my hysterics and he let me pass. I got deported about an hour later, but it was worth it.

How did you get interested in technology and how easily did you embrace it?

The key part of a journalist's toolbox has been technology: getting the story usually involves, at some point, a phone line, and then getting the story out has, right from the mid 1980s, usually involved a computer (a Tandy, in the early days) and a communications device (from coupler to modem to HSDPA.) I learned the hard way that technology was key part of being a good foreign correspondent because it was usually the difference between being able to get a story out and getting an earful from an editor. Kabul was difficult because we had no reliable source of electricity, let alone any kind of telecoms network. We brought in a satphone – which we could never get to work outside Kabul, unfortunately, usually because people would fire at us if we stopped too long anywhere – and a small satellite dish, which we used to run off a smelly generator we kept in a disused chicken coop in the back garden.

Technology is a means to an end – how do you manage to reflect this in your columns?

I try to stay rooted in the practical, and not celebrate newness for its own sake. I rarely recommend purchasing anything – most services have free versions, and they're often enough. And I believe a cheap netbook is just as good as a fancy higher-end device. The truth is that most journalists – most people – have more than enough firepower at their disposal which lies unused. Most phones these days do a lot more than we ask of them, and there's some great software out there which can make us much more productive without having to shell out money or learn complicated new ways of working. Part of my digital journalism course is just about being more productive, and it's surprising how many of us can be better reporters and editors just by harnessing the simple tools that we already have within arm's reach.

After all, the technology is just there to help us get the story, tell the story and then get the story out; if it means we can do more and better stories, then that's the best role we can ask it to play for us. Being a good journalist is knowing who to talk to and how to build and maintain your network of sources. The use of social networking tools helps journalists do this. Twitter, considered by many as a threat to the news publishing industry, could complement a journalist's efforts and become an effective tool for 'crowd sourcing' or for trumpeting news. Online tools such as Evernote help today's journalists, for whom time is of the essence, to retrieve information as quickly as possible no matter where they are located. Most of the online tools come free and are easy to use and, share.

From page one editor of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* to a reporter for the newspaper in Indonesia… was it your choice to get back to the field?

I loved editing but it was hard to escape the conclusion that I'd rather be writing the story than editing it. Editing the *AWSJ*, as it was then, was a joy, however. On the night Suharto decided to resign in May 1998, I was the duty editor and I had the pleasure of staying up all night and even saying, sort of, "stop the presses" when we delayed printing until the last possible moment, so convinced were our reporters that Suharto had decided to resign. We ran the headline over five columns and, luckily, we were right. Walking out into the Hong Kong daylight after that was worth every lousy night I'd spent tweaking less historic copy.

Improved design, content can attract newspaper readership

Many newspaper publishers redesign their product every few years, especially to attract young readers. However, Hans Peter Janish, newspaper designer and consultant who focuses on the redesign of existing publications and advises on all issues pertaining to media design, says design change should not be done for design purposes alone. "It should be accompanied by editorial changes, for the benefit of the reader. You may need to change the typeface, and may offend some readers in the bargain, or you may need to change the legibility. If you change content along with design, if you give readers something better, especially in terms of legibility, even older readers will accept the change," he explains.

About twenty years ago, design was considered secondary by newspaper publishers. Today, design, Janish points out, has become a basic rule to attract different readership. "We have different media behaviour, whether young or old.

If you look at how you watch television, how fast you change channels, it's the same way you react to a newspaper. You like the content of a page or you flip.

Or compare it to Internet behaviour – how fast do you change Web sites. If you Google a word, you get 20,000 results.

How fast do you decide which one to choose? It's almost the same with newspapers nowadays. So design is essential if newspapers want to survive."

Janish stresses the importance of cropping and placement of pictures on newspaper pages. "You need to be aware that for good pictures you must have photographers. If newspapers keep downsizing pages, and photographers downsize visuals, the pictures do not work by themselves.

You need to crop and place them right," he says, adding, "It's not the picture really. It's the visual impact. It can be a combination of a bold headline and a picture, or an infographic."

Janish agrees that with the reporter now doubling up as photographer, without adequate knowledge of photography, the quality of the pictures is getting affected. "It's the same story if the photographer is not employed by the newspaper and is an outsider, if he has 10-15 assignments a day. Reinvestment in visual journalism pays off in the long-term," he adds.

Hans Peter Janisch at the WAN-IFRA workshop in Chennai.

Janish finds today's young designers extremely creative. "That's because they are able to focus more on creativity than having to worry about technique. In the earlier days everything was technique-driven.

Now everything gets done with the help of InDesign and Photoshop, so there's more scope for creativity. You really don't have to worry about technique as such.

Earlier, creativity was somehow restricted by technique. Indian designers are able to come up with a good design in a very short time."

Research has shown that young readers prefer smaller sizes of newspapers. A tabloid, according to Janish, is a very fascinating tool. "I'd prefer a smaller broadsheet where you can have sections; it makes it easier to be shared at the breakfast table, for example. Everything has pros and cons, it depends on the paper itself," he says.

Janish's recipe: keep it simple. "At the workshop here, the more the participants kept their designs simple, the better their designs were. It becomes easy for readers to understand.

The more you play with colour and typefaces, the more difficult it will get for the reader. It's akin to writing tight and using fewer words; and it's difficult too.

It's for the designer to make it clean and easy." Some of Janish's most satisfying moments have been when the first copy of a newspaper carrying his new design has come hot off the press.

"Every time I get to do the redesign, and when it's all done, when the publisher and managing editor are waiting at the press to see the first copy with everybody else around, that's the pay-off for a year and a half of work. It's always a big thrill."

He is convinced that the publisher, editors and technical staff must get involved in the redesign to make the exercise successful.

Referring to India, China and Malaysia, Janish says: "This is the market for design because there is still a reading society, a reading culture.

If we do it right over here, many of the mistakes Western publishers did can be avoided. For example, how to treat employees, how to outsource, how to cut down on resources.

We have the circulation here, the reach. In the West, the reading habit is falling and if you depend on circulation your paper will die. So, many newspapers have a combination of print and online; some come free. Different business models will appear.

In the West we are looking at free publications that are getting better and better. They do not rely on being sold, but strictly rely on advertisement revenue.

The more local, the better. The paper can then really make money."

Workshops, Janish adds, are important to raise the awareness of design, to bring ideas to the fore.

"A workshop does not get paid off in a minute; it's making little ideas work. We must have workshops that have a practical part to go along with it, so that designers not only hear but can try out things."

Over the years Janish has designed numerous newspapers in Germany, Luxemburg, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kazakhstan. Since 1990, he has guided WAN-IFRA design newspaper as well as in-house seminars. Apart from teaching, he serves as a faculty member at the Institute for Journalistic Education in Hagen, Germany.

He was one of the founders of the German branch of the Society for News Design and currently serves as International Director of Society for News Design (SND). At the WAN-IFRA hands-on workshop for designers in Chennai, which Hans conducted, there were participants from India as well as from Bangladesh, Malaysia, Oman and Singapore. The training focused on the transition from a newspaper to a daily magazine, a recent trend, and participants learned how to use and crop photographs effectively.

Women in the Indian media – then and now

WELCOME ABOARD, MS GUPTA. HERE'S YOUR ID CARD, LUNCH COUPONS...NAIL POLISH AND LIPSTICK REMOVER...THE PAPER BAG IS OPTIONAL, BUT REMEMBER,OUR DRESS CODE ALLOWS ONLY SAREES.

Illustration by Arun Ramkumar

Many years ago, journalist Rami Chhabra – then just 19 years old -- met editor Prem Bhatia of The Statesman, *Calcutta, for a job in the newspaper. She was well qualified, she had just won an award from the BBC, and she was passionate about working in a newspaper. Prem Bhatia looked up from his desk and said "Young lady, if you want to work in a daily, wipe off that lipstick and remove those ear-rings." He said that pretty girls shouldn't be in newspaper offices, for they distracted the men and made them compete for dates. Prem Bhatia went back to his work, and Rami Chhabra stood dismissed. She approached other newspapers, but they suggested that she write feature articles from home. Read on ...*

S. R. Madhu

A consultant writer-editor based in Chennai, the author had served as information officer in the United Nations for 15 years. He served earlier with The Times of India *in Bombay, with the USIS Bombay as editor, and* SPAN Magazine *in New Delhi as assistant managing editor*

Girilal Jain of *The Times of India* said a daily newspaper was no place for a woman. Later, his own daughter joined a daily newspaper. Pran Chopra, another great editor, denied Razia Ismail a job saying "I'm sure you'll refuse to do night shifts." Razia Ismail later had a distinguished career in the United Nations.

The status of women in the Indian media has since undergone a tectonic shift. In the 1960s, most newspapers did not even have a single woman. Today they are everywhere -- in newspapers, as reporters, subs or feature-writers or even as editors; in magazines of all kinds, general-purpose or technical or trade. And women are the face of the electronic media. Bright, bold and brash young women staff every TV channel – as announcers or comperes or as executives behind the scenes. Women are sought-after in PR and publicity as well.

What are the strengths of women as media specialists? They are more observant than men, more sensitive to unfairness and injustice, less vulnerable to distractions and temptations. These are generalisations of course, and there are exceptions.

Women can surpass men as reporters and interviewers, because they can elicit information better than men – whether the subjects are men or women. Let's say a male celebrity is to be interviewed. He is very forthcoming, particularly if the reporter is pretty! And she gets easy access to the celebrity's wife, daughter, sister or mother, and lands precious anecdotes or tidbits from them.

A male reporter of a film magazine once complained bitterly to me about this phenomenon. He said male stars fell for good-looking girl reporters, and gave them scoops and spicy information they didn't care to give the men. To make it worse, he was given the job of polishing the writing of his female colleague. "She gets a big by-line, I'm the anonymous ghost."

Women journalists have of course written more often and with greater empathy on the problems of women. There's a strong connection between women's media and women's empowerment, says Gloria Steinem herself, the legendary pioneer of women's lib. In India, atrocities against women, particularly in villages, continue. But once detected, a crime against women makes a bigger splash in newspapers, magazines, TV and radio than it did years ago.

American TV celebrity Barbara Walters once remarked that women journalists have done more for women's empowerment than women leaders. There's perhaps some truth to this claim. Take Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Sonia Gandhi, Mayawati, Jayalalitha. Their record on women's empowerment is thin; it's one of words rather than deeds. They have spoken forcefully on the subject at public forums, but have done little by way of action – by the executive, the legislature or the judiciary. Women journalists have highlighted women's issues through reports and campaigns, and sometimes forced action as well.

Difficult working conditions

For women in Indian newspapers, the struggle for recognition or even basic facilities or privileges was tough. They faced difficult working conditions. There was no separate toilet for them, and a girl reporter often had to go down three floors or go up four floors to find a ladies' toilet.

Usha Rai of *The Times of India*, wife of famous photographer Raghu Rai, says that when she got pregnant, she was shocked to discover that there was no provision for maternity leave! She had to fight for it before she got it. Some newspapers peremptorily

Earlier, women in the media were singled out for soft stories, but things are changed dramaically in recent times.

divided three months of maternity leave into six weeks before the baby, six weeks after the baby. If the lady said, "I want only one week before the baby and seven weeks after the baby," managements didn't agree.

Women had complaints about unequal pay and work conditions. Women were often given low-fee contracts, not absorbed on the staff. And women were always assigned soft stories – flower shows, gallery shows, fashion shows, beauty contests, book launches, film and drama reviews. They were thrown crumbs from the reporting beat, while men covered Parliament, the Prime Minister's office, the Home Ministry, Finance Ministry and so on. There was sexual harassment. In Mumbai, a news bureau chief assigned a girl to do a story on pornographic literature on the pavements, and passed on to her on his collection of pornographic limericks as "research material".

Ammu Joseph who lives in Bangalore, has written a book titled *Making News: Women in Journalism.* It is based on interviews with 200 women journalists from different parts of India. The book contains many interesting stories and anecdotes, many of them unpleasant. In a newspaper office the night shift is the most important. Meena Menon of the UNI says when she volunteered for night duty, the news editor remarked: "So you don't mind being raped!" And broke into a laughing fit till he became breathless. Some women who walked home after night shift were harassed on the road. People assumed that a woman alone on the street at night could only be a prostitute. In the 1980s, labour laws were passed saying that no woman should work alone on a newspaper night shift, there should be at least two women. And they should be provided transport back home. Because of this rule, many newspapers all over India did not employ women on the night shift.

On the other hand, some newspapers were sometimes overly protective about women. Usha Rai was once covering a price rise demonstration outside the Super Bazar in Delhi. Word broke out that the police had resorted to tear gas. Her bosses in *The Times of India* broke into a panic. They got two male journalists to locate and rescue Usha Rai.

In *The Statesman,* Tavleen Singh, who is one of India's best-known columnists, insisted that she would drive home in her own car after night duty, she wouldn't take the office car. For some time, *The Statesman* sent a chauffeur-driven office car behind Tavleen Singh's car, to escort her.

The Renaissance: women in the media after 1976

In 1976, after the political emergency was lifted and Mrs Gandhi was thrown out of power, the Indian press went through a renaissance. Many new magazines started. For women, the floodgates opened. Opportunities for them expanded and opened up. Today, women are no longer singled out for soft stories like flower shows. Depending on their qualifications, they cover political intrigues, economic trends, the CBI, foreign affairs, sports, the stock market – not to mention movies, fashion, and lifestyles. They are talented, sharp, ambitious and aggressive. And TV news is dominated by women.

Here are snapshots of some of the best and brightest women in the media business today.

Anita Pratap first came to the limelight when she interviewed Velupillai Prabhakaran of LTTE and wrote on the shameful anti-Tamil riots of 1983. In fact there were rumours of a romance between her and Prabhakaran, and she discounted them fiercely. She said Prabhakaran was grateful to her for her coverage of the ethnic problem. She wrote the book "Island of blood" on Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

Anita Pratap has worked for *Indian Express, India Today* and CNN, and is now a documentary film-maker. She has been at the military battlefront – she has

Anita Pratap.

reported the Afghan war and the Taliban's triumph, India-Pakistan wars and the Naxalite menace in the northeast, for CNN and Time magazine. She has interviewed the Prime Ministers or Presidents of several countries. She was the first TV journalist to report from the highest battleground on earth, the 22,000 ft Siachen glacier, where Indian and Pakistani armies exchanged fire almost every day.

Anita Pratap writes forcefully, insightfully, often caustically on political subjects. Besides hardcore breaking news, Anita Pratap has reported on development issues such as population, education, health care, poverty alleviation, women's concerns.

The editor of *Manushi* is a social activist and a great symbol of women's empowerment. *Manushi* has been described as one of the world's best women's magazines, also as the voice of India's conscience.

Manushi was founded in 1978 by **Madhu Kishwar** and a few others with a capital of Rs 500. What makes the magazine unique is that it accepts no advertisements and no donations. Sometimes the magazine doesn't have money even for postage. In its early years, it could not even afford a typewriter. The magazine has 6000 subscribers in India, Europe, the US, Africa and Australia. (The print edition of *Manushi* was suspended in 2007 because of a funding crunch, but is sought to be revived. An electronic edition continues.)

Says Madhu Kishwar: "In India, you get a lot of affection and respect if people are convinced that you're not out to make money, that you are a genuine social worker." *Manushi* is more than a magazine. It provides legal aid, it conducts human rights campaigns, it publishes books, it even organizes street plays. It exposes discrimination against women. But it is not a magazine for women only. *Manushi* is also every thinking man's magazine.

Madhu Kishwar.

Early issues of *Manushi* focused on atrocities against women and the plight of the landless poor. It campaigned for street vendors, rickshaw pullers, gender justice, laws for women. But it later became more reflective and philosophical. It carries inspirational people profiles, it discusses Indian traditions and tribal rituals. It carries poetry, film reviews, book reviews, short stories and analyses of social trends and political events. Every issue carries a thoughtful piece by Madhu Kishwar herself. She once outlined a down-to-earth 10-point plan to strengthen Hinduism. Readers almost died laughing when *Manushi* ran a piece on the superiority of Indian-style toilets over Western-style toilets!

Journalist-author-TV anchor **Mrinal Pande**, 64, is an icon of Indian journalism. She was the first Indian woman to be the editor-in-chief of a national daily newspaper, *Hindustan*. (it is part of the *Hindustan Times* Group and comes out from several cities.)

Mrinal Pande has studied English and Sanskrit literature, ancient Indian history, archeology, classical music and the visual arts. She published a short story at the age of 21, and has been writing ever since – journalism, fiction, drama and essays. She has also been a columnist, broadcaster and television anchor. She conducts a weekly programme titled 'Baaton baton mein' for Lok Sabha TV.

She has spent several years on the National Commission for Self-

Mrinal Pande.

Employed Women, inquiring into the conditions for rag-pickers, vegetable sellers and domestic help. Her recent book *Stepping Out, Life and Sexuality in Rural India,* is a revealing book on the condition of women in rural India.

Sucheta Dalal, 49, is one of India's most powerful journalists. She is the person who exposed the Harshad Mehta scam in the early 1990s and the Ketan Parekh scam a couple of years ago. She is a consulting editor of *MoneyLife,* a much respected personal finance magazine. She is a columnist for the *Indian Express* and for rediff.com, and a consulting editor of *Financial Express.*

Sucheta Dalal is known for a simple terse style, free of

Sucheta Dalal.

flourishes. She writes from the standpoint of the common citizen and the average investor, and she fearlessly exposes what is corrupt, what is dubious, what is questionable.

Sucheta is the author of two books,. One of them is about stock market scams, the other is a biography of industrialist A D Shroff. She has worked with two financial dailies -- *Business Standard* and *The Economic Times.* The government made her a

member of the Investor Protection and Education Fund, and that has been warmly welcomed by the general public.

Sevanti Ninan is one of India's best-informed writers on the media. Founder-editor of The Hoot.org, a media watch website run by the Media Foundation, she is also a regular columnist for *The Hindu* and *Hindustan.* She is the author of the excellent book *Through the magic window: Television and change in India.*

Ninan has been scathingly critical about the silence of much

Sevanti Ninan.

of the print media on the Radia tapes, which showed that some leading print and TV journalists enjoyed a cosy relationship with corporates and did them favours. She says TV channels may have a code of ethics, but they were apparently for junior staff. "I am not sure editors, editorial directors and star anchors believe these apply to them."

She says that the TV news business in India had grown so rapidly that sufficient time and attention were not devoted to training newcomers. "Competition also makes a lot of ethical safeguards fly out of the window."

Vanita Kohli is another perceptive writer on the media, though she focuses on media as business. An MBA in marketing, Vanita Kohli worked with *A & M, Intelligent Investor* (now *Outlook Money*), and *Business World.* She is the author of the very well researched book, The Indian Media Business. She did a fellowship at Cambridge University on

Vanita Kohli.

copyrights in digital music.

Bachi Karkaria is an excellent writer – witty, forceful, elegant. She has held one of the prize jobs in journalism in India, that of editor of *The Times of India.* She has also written a book on the history of *The Times of India.* She says her father passed on two mantras to her. One: make your own sunshine. Two, be flexible. If you bend, you won't break.

She is outspoken about how far women have come in the media. She says "The women we interview for jobs are so much better than men, that sometimes we take a man just as a token gesture for men." About the biggest challenge facing women in the media, she says: They should stop thinking gender, they should only think professional.

I think that's a great message for the future. The media in India belongs to women – provided

Bachi Karkaria.

they don't talk gender, they only talk professional.

Barkha Dutt, managing editor, NDTV 24 x 7, should be described as the First Lady of Indian television. Daughter of Prabha Dutt, who was chief of bureau of the *Hindustan Times* and one of the pioneers of women's journalism, Barkha graduated in literature from St Stephen's College, New Delhi, and obtained a master's in mass communication from the Jamiia Milia Islamia Mass Communication Research Centre, New Delhi. She also obtained a master's from the Columbia School of Journalism in the US.

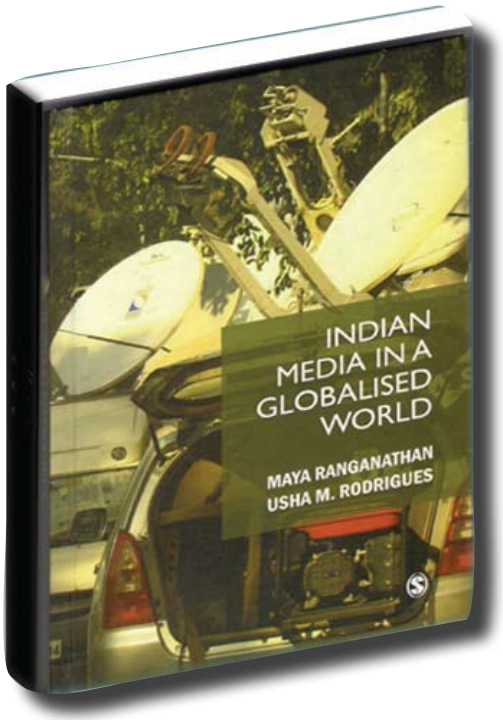
Barkha has recorded many 'firsts', and won awards for her

Barkha Dutt.

coverage of the 1999 Kargil War, the 2004 tsunami and her regular Sunday evening talk show, 'We the people'. The Government of India conferred the Padma Shri on her. For the passionate reporter, nothing matters except a good story. To illustrate this trait in Barkha Dutt, here's an anecdote. When the BJP was in power, Afghanistan was a hot spot of conflict, and Barkha wanted to go there for an eye-witness story. India's Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh was going to Kandahar on a political visit, he wasn't taking any press people with him. But Barkha was determined to go. She rushed to the airport. When she saw a bread van about to head towards Jaswant Singh's plane, she sweet-talked the driver of the van, got into it and reached the plane. The Finance Minister was horrified and ticked her off. Barkha was disappointed that she couldn't pull it off. "But at least I tried," she said.

(Editor: Barkha Dutt was one of the senior journalists to come under a bit of a cloud after the disclosure of the Nira Radia tapes. But we will let that pass here and look at her outstanding contribution to journalism.)

A refreshing look at the media in India



Indian Media in a Globalised World

Authors: Maya Ranganathan and Usha M. Rodrigues
Pages: 275
Year of Publication: 2010
Publishers: Sage Publications, New Delhi
Price: Rs 550

C.S.H.N. Murthy

The writer is an associate professor in Mass Communication and Journalism, Tezpur University

Indian Media in a Globalised World, from Sage Publications, New Delhi, offers a refreshing new academic look at the expanding Indian media phenomenon post-globalisation. The authors of the book are young and upcoming academics, having received doctoral and post-doctoral accomplishments from abroad and presently having teaching assignments in Australia. They say in the book that most of the content is based on doctoral and post-doctoral work, besides some of the wok carried out by the students of Maya Ranganathan when she was a professor at the Manipal Institute of Communication, Manipal, Udipi.

The book is divided into four broad sections: economic, political and cultural aspects and media policy. Running across 12 chapters, of which seven were written by Ranganathan and the remaining five by Rodrigues, the book meanders through the dynamics of globalisation which subjected Indian media to different hues of pulls and pressures.

The first chapter, Glocalisation of Indian Television, deals with the establishment of television in the private sector post-globalisation and how foreign television channels such as Star TV and CNN-IBN established themselves at the national and regional level in India. The chapter sort of grounds the Indian television phenomenon within the appropriate theoretical discourse, especially the process within which it has been evolving over 15 years since gloablisation.

In Nationalism as a Marketing Tool by MNC Advertisements, Ranganathan articulates well the hegemonic attitude of multinationals and their strategy of adopting local cultures and national identities for advertising. She cited a number of examples of MNC advertisements featuring local dresses, and linguistic cultures and how they invoked national identities such as use of the

national flag and national symbols. However, the period of her observation of MNC advertisements is invisible throughout.

Another chapter by Rodrigues captures well the print media scenario since Independence and the strategies publishing houses adopted to expand and sustain circulation. Since the book is about Indian media, this reviewer feels inclusion of references from other prominent publications could have added a more holistic flavour.

Ranganathan also provides a historical perspective to the growth of FM Radio. But she does not go beyond that in trying to assess how far the FM phenomenon is a parallel or a substitute to All India Radio. An in-depth study of the FM phenomenon with regard to its utility to society, socially, economically and culturally, has not yet been done.

The Pan-Tamil Rhetoric in Regional Media chapter views the state of Tamil Nadu in a distinct political, cultural and historical context, where English and Tamil media have shown extreme divergence in their presentation of content. After Anna Durai, Tamil politics changed dramatically, with power drifting in favour of regional political identities such as the DMK and later to the AIDMK. Ranganathan's observation of Tamil media being influenced by ideologues of different political hues, besides the LTTE, is a right hypothesis though a much more rigorous media discourse would be required to establish it on theoretical level.

Citizen Journalism and the Public Sphere in India by Rodrigues portrays the changing scenario of peoples' expectations and frustrations with the mainstream media, which according to many, including reputable journalists in traditional media, caters mostly to the corporatisation and commodification of news rather than to public service.

The Naga Nation on the Net by Ranganathan deals with the historical backdrop of the Nagas' fight for the separation of Nagaland from India through the alternative media such as Web sites and portals. As a study to propagate an ideology on an alternative media is considered, it is a wonderful case study that engages media discourse for the future to come.

Another interesting chapter is Ranganathan writing about Towards a More Inclusive Indian identity, with a case study of the Hindi film, Swades. Her wonderful analysis in drawing clearly the boundaries between the terms of dominant discourse using the film frames is an asset. One needs to read this article before attempting any other similar work as it offers the basic structure of comparative study. The study also offers a contrast with what Srividya Subramanian's A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Indian in Films produced in the West. Though the study differed in its basic hypotheses and content analysis with that of Srividya's work, a comparative approach to the portrayal of Indians within the Indian context and the portrayal of Indians within the western context offers a promising complimentary approach. The chapter dealing with The Archetypes of Sita, Kaikeyi and Surpanaka Stride the Small Screen is interesting and offers a first ever study of Indian television serials/stories relating to the portrayal of women in the Tamil television programmes.

Both writers have done well in offering a constructive discourse on the future of the blogosphere as well as on television policy. The chapter on public service broadcasting in India could have been relocated to the media policy section. Some observations relating to Doordarshan's legacy, as noted by Rodrigues, are age-old and are no more relevant. Today, much of the public concern is not about Doordarshan but about the attitudes of private television broadcasters who neither self-regulate nor accept regulation.

Finally, the books is a must read for media students, research scholars, and academics and professionals connected with the media. Sage Publication can improve its reference system in the text by citing appropriate years of work of the authors within brackets; at other places text is cited without the corresponding author's name in brackets.

Subba Rao Pantulu: for whom journalism was a mission

The first of May, 2010 was a landmark in the recent history of Rajamundry when more than 700 people, including old and young, from the legal, medical and journalistic fraternity braved the sweltering heat to witness the unveiling of the bronze statue of Nyapathy Subba Rao Pantulu,who many consider the uncrowned king of this cultural capital of Andhra Pradesh. The site where his statue majestically stands is aptly named The Hindu Square.

Subba Rao Pantulu, a leading advocate, freedom fighter and social reformer, was one among the six who founded *The Hindu* in 1878 to support the Indian freedom movement and create awareness among people. It was at a time when the English press was almost exclusively controlled by the British. Senior writer and Chennai city historian S. Muthiah writes about the birth of *The Hindu* when it celebrated 125 years in 2003:

"Believe it or not, *The Hindu* was born in ire. Six angry young men, all barely out of their teens, felt the campaign waged by the Anglo-Indian Press —

N. Subba Rao Pantulu.

newspapers owned and edited by the British — against the appointment of the first Indian, T. Muthuswami Aiyer, to the bench of the High Court was blatantly unfair and should be forcefully rebutted. So they borrowed a rupee and twelve annas and founded *The Hindu*, printing 80 copies at the Srinidhi Press in Mint Street, Black Town and promising every Wednesday evening an eight-page paper, each a quarter of today's page size, for four annas."

Only Subba Rao Pantulu continued to write for the paper for many years, till its diamond jubilee in 1938. In an article he wrote (he was 82 then): "As the

sole survivor of a band of half a dozen young men who started the paper, I rejoice that *The Hindu* has completed the diamond jubilee of sixty years.My friends who took part in starting the paper were G. Subramania Aiyer, M.. Veeraraghavachari, T.T. Rangachari and D. Kesava Rao Pant who have not been spared to see the glorious position which The Hindu now occupies in the journalistic world. All of us were then members of the Triplicane Literary Society, just fresh from college, and were eager to start a weekly newspaper, with the ambition of rousing public opinion and guiding it, though without any capital whatever and without any thought whether we would be able to keep it up financially and otherwise and compete with the dailies ably conducted by Englishmen. At first for a few months, it appeared in cyclostyle as a fortnightly. Due to the encouragement of friends, we converted it into a regular weekly in September 1878. It was soon felt that it supplied a great want and was received favourably by the public. Shortly after, I had to leave for Rajamundry, though I continued to support the paper."

The Hindu published a marvelous and befitting editorial on the life and times of Subba Rao Pantulu on January 7, 1941, following his demise. Excerpts: Mr N. Subba Rao Pantulu escaped the fate of most public men who live to a great age and whose names become 'A legend to the younger generation', which is often a euphemistic way of saying it knows very little about them and cares less. His magnificent vitality held good to the last and this was fortunate both for him and for the public. For he was the man who had the insatiable zest for life and an inexhaustible capacity for well doing. At eighty five, he was as active as ever in promoting the progress of liberal Hinduism and in infusing into younger men his own quiet faith in constructive work in all spheres of national life. His ripe wisdom and judgment at the service of all who sought his counsel, and his eager curiosity in regard to all matters that had a bearing on the people's advancement kept him perpetually young. Himself a lover of the golden mean, he could understand and make allowances for the ardour of youth. Many and distinguished as were his services to the country in the legislature, in local self government and other spheres. To The Hindu, his death comes as a personal loss. He was one of the young men who founded this journal more than sixty years ago, and to the last he evinced a paternal interest in it.

N. Meera Raghavendra Rao
The writer is a freelance journalist and author based in Chennai

Jacob Mathew is new WAN-IFRA president

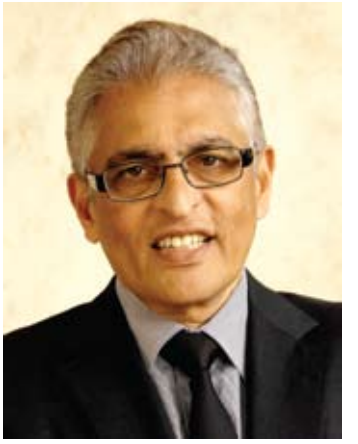
Jacob Mathew, executive editor and publisher, Malayala Manorama Group of Publications, Kerala, India has been elected president of the World Association of Newspapers and NewsPublishers (WAN-IFRA). Mathew who will begin his two-year term on 1 July is the first Indian and the second Asian (after Dr Seok Hyun Hong of Korea) to hold the presidency of the global organisation of the world's press. He will succeed Gavin O'Reilly, chief executive officer, Independent News and Media, who has been president since 2004 and notably oversaw the 2009 merger of the World Association of Newspapers with IFRA, the research and service organisation for the news publishing industry.

Mathew was elected during the WAN-IFRA Board meeting in Dublin, Ireland held on Friday by the WAN-IFRA general assembly of members. Tomas Brunegard, CEO, the Stampen Group in Sweden was elected as the first vice president.

"I have served on the board and the executive council for a period of four years. I have also been an active participant in many WAN-IFRA events for over two decades. WAN-IFRA's wonderful work has contributed much, especially when the industry is going through acritical period," Mathew said.

"There are opportunities and challenges. We know the global trend in the industry. However, the encouraging sign in the Asian market at the moment is different. So, one needs to address issues separately. With the committed team of WAN-IFRA, we should be able to handle the different challenging situations in a positive manner."

The Malayala Manorama group publishes Malayala Manorama daily with a circulation of more than 1.9 million copies per day. The group has 50 publications as well as the 24-hour news broadcast channel Manorama News and FM stations. Manorama online is one of the most widely read newspaper websites in India.



Jacob Mathew.

WAN-IFRA, based in Paris (France) and Darmstadt (Germany), is a global organization of newspaper editors and publishers. It represents more than 18000 publications, 15000 online sites and more than 3000 companies in over 120 countries. The World Association of Newspapers, founded in 1948, and IFRA, the research and service organization founded in 1962, merged in 2009 to from WAN-IFRA. Its core mission is to defend and promote quality journalism, editorial integrity, press freedom and development of new media business.

Mathew is currently a trustee of the Press Institute of India – Research Institute for Newspaper Development and is also on the Asian board of INMA (International Newspaper Marketing Association). He is a past president of the Indian Newspaper Society and has been past chairman of the Advertising Standards Council of India.

Ajit Bhattacharjee, former PII director, passes away

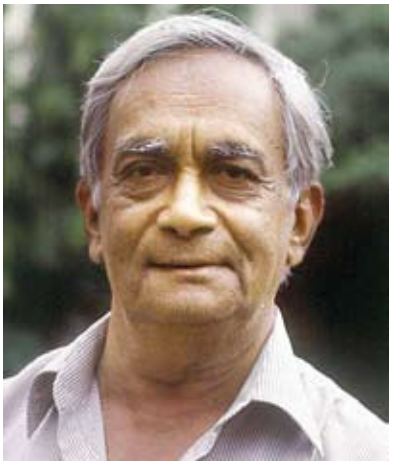
Veteran journalist Ajit Bhattacharjee, former director of the Press Institute of India, died at his home in New Delhi on Monday, April 4, after a protracted illness. A leading figure of the Right to Information movement, Bhattacharjee was 87 and is survived by a son and two daughters.

In a career spanning 37 years, Bhattacharjee was editor of *The Hindustan Times, The Times of India* and the *Indian Express.* It was after retirement that he held the post of director/editor of the Press Institute of India, among some of his assignments.

Born in Simla in 1924, Bhattacharjee obtained his BA and MA degrees from St Stephen's College, Delhi, and began his career in journalism in 1946 as an apprentice sub-editor and reporter in *The Hindustan Times.* In 1947, he flew to Srinagar soon after the first Indian troops had been sent there to repel the tribal invaders. He returned to Kashmir the following year to cover the Indo-Pak war.

He joined *The Statesmen,* New Delhi, in 1951 and was appointed Special Representative and Parliamentary Correspondent. Ten years later, he returned to the *Hindustan Times* as its correspondent in Washington and the United Nation. He came back to Delhi as its Editor in 1967. In 1971, he was appointed Resident Editor, *The Times of India*, Bombay.

He became a close associate of Jayaprakash Narayan and in 1975 he quit *The Times of India* to edit JP's weekly *Everyman's.* When the weekly was closed during the Emergency, Bhattacharjee



Ajit Bhattacharjee.

became the editor of the *Indian Express,* one of the few newspapers to have spoken out against the draconian measure of the Indira Gandhi government. After he retired from the *Indian Express* in 1983, Bhattacharjee served as editorial adviser of *Democrat Nigeria* and then of *Deccan Herald,* Bangalore.

Bhattacharjee was also a fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. In 1995, he was appointed director of the Press Institute of India. And after retirement, he became the editor of *Transparency Review*, a journal of the Centre of Media Studies, New Delhi, which focuses on right of information. He has written several books, among them: *Kashmir, the Wounded Valley; Jayaprakash Narayan, a Ploitical Biography, Countdown to Partition, Tragic Hero of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah; Dateline Bangladesh and Social Justice and the Constitution.*

25th edition of *Dainik Jagran Cityplus* in Malleshwaram

Jagran Prakashan has launched the 25th edition of *Dainik Jagran Cityplus,* its free community newspaper, from Bengaluru. The product will target the middle and upper middle class families in Malleshwaram.

With this launch, the English weekly tabloid now has six editions from Bengaluru. For the record, the brand currently runs 10 editions in Delhi, five in Pune, two in Hyderabad, and two in Mumbai. This is the group's 80th newspaper edition. It also publishes *Dainik Jagran, i next, Mid-Day* (in English and Gujarati), and *Inquilab,* in Urdu.

As part of its expansion strategy, *Dainik Jagran Cityplus* plans to penetrate into the Tier I and Tier II cities of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh by 2012.

City Plus targets local advertisers – from small shops, retailers, and professionals to big retail stores. The newspaper recently relaunched its Web site and marked a robust presence in the digital domain.

City Plus is positioned editorially as a paper that focuses on life and lifestyle on a more local and sub-local level. The newspaper carries localised community news, events and happenings, while the features focus on lifestyle, accompanied with customised information, inputs on a more local level for value-addition to the story, more relevant to the individual readers.

The first edition of the newspaper was launched in Bangalore from Indira Nagar on September 27, 2007. As of now, *City Plus* has its presence in cities including Delhi and NCR, Bangalore, Pune, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

The Common India to hit Orissa market

SLB Media & Entertainment (P) Ltd is set to enter the English newspaper space with *The Common India.* The paper is set for launch in the next few months and will be priced at Rs 5. The daily will have approximately 18-22 pages, of which eight will be all-colour pages and the rest in black and white.

SLB Media will initially start with four editions from Bhubaneswar (Orissa), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Kolkata (West Bengal) and Patna (Bihar).

The initial print run of the newspaper is expected to be 25,000 copies. The group is aiming to expand its circulation to 2 lakh copies in a year. SLB Media had launched an Oriya daily, *Sarbasadharana*, on February 8, 2011. The paper had an initial print run of 20,000 copies in Orissa.

As far as circulation and distribution strategy is concerned, the group plans to have a strong and effective network for the new daily. In coastal Orissa, the group has a dedicated network that distributes only SLB products along with *Sarbasadharana.* In these places, the group will tie up with the existing team. In the rest of Orissa, where the group shares its agents with other publications, it will create a new dedicated set of agents and representatives.

The new English daily will face some stiff competition from the national biggies in the Orissa market. *The Times of India* has reported an average issue readership (AIR) of 186,000 according to recent IRS numbers. *The New Indian Express* has an AIR of 124,000, while *The Hindu* has registered an AIR of 28,000 – all three are strong competitors. The other English dailies present in the state include *The Telegraph, The Hindustan Times,* and *The Statesman.*

The SLB Group of Companies started off in 2005 as a third-party distribution company with six branches across Orissa.

Sunday Standard hits Delhi newsstands

Sunday Standard, the weekend edition of *The New Indian Express,* hit newsstands in Delhi in mid-March. The newspaper is all-colour. Initially, *Sunday Standard* will cover Delhi and the NCR region. The paper will face stiff competition from *Sunday Guardian,* the weekly newspaper of veteran journalist MJ Akbar, and the weekly *Crest* edition of *The Times of India. The New Indian Express* is published from five states – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Orissa.

IRS 2010 Q4: Growth in dailies continues; no surprises in top order

The Media Research User's Council (MRUC) has released the Quarter 4 data for the Indian Readership Survey (IRS) 2010. The top-line results once again show growth for most of the dailies. The top five have no changes in the order of the publications.

Hindi daily *Dainik Jagran* leads with an average readership figure (AIR) of 16,066,000. In the Q3 results, *Dainik Jagran* had an AIR of 15,950,000. The number two most read daily is Hindi newspaper *Dainik Bhaskar,* which has grown from 13,488,000 to 13,992,000 in its AIR. *Hindustan* has grown from an AIR of 10,839,000 to 11,452,000 and remains at the third position. Malayalam daily *Malayala Manorama* has seen a marginal decline but continues to be fourth most read daily with an AIR of 9,930,000. *Amar Ujala* has grown to show an AIR of 8,640,000. Marathi daily *Lokmat* too has registered a drop but remains firm on the number five spot with an AIR of 7,712,000.English daily *The Times of India* has grown and now has an AIR of 7,424,000, continuing to stay at No. 7. While *Rajasthan Patrika* has dropped from 7,217,000 to 71,66,000, it has managed to beat *Daily*

Thanthi to occupy the number eighth spot in this round. *Daily Thanthi* has dropped from an AIR of 7,245,000 to 7,014,000. *Mathrubhumi* is the tenth most read daily this round with an AIR of 6,637,000.

IRS 2010: Hindi dailies add 40 lakh readers

Hindi dailies command a significant share of readership in India, and 2010 has only added further strength to the platform. The ndian Readership Survey (IRS) 2010 pronounced a healthy last quarter for Hindi newspapers. The Hindi dailies genre began the year with an average issue readership (AIR) of 586.98 Lac in Q1, which grew to 626.94 Lac in Q4.

The top three most read Hindi dailies were the 'regulars' – *Dainik Jagran* at the top, followed by *Dainik Bhaskar* and *Hindustan.* Of these, Hindustan has recorded the highest quarter on quarter (QOQ) growth, rising from an AIR 99.14 lakh to 114.52 lakh in Q4. The growth in readership numbers for Hindustan has narrowed the gap between the second ranked Hindi daily, *Dainik Bhaskar.*

Dainik Bhaskar has seen a rise this quarter too and now stands at an AIR of 139.92 lakh from 134.88 lakh AIR in Q3. This number was at 133.29 lakh in Q1. The top read Hindi daily, *Dainik Jagran,* has comparatively recorded a lesser growth this quarter -- from an AIR of 159.5 lakh in Q3 to 160.66 lakh in Q4, which, while it is a rise this quarter, is below the AIR number of 163.13 lakh in Q1.

Firmly at the number four position, the combined editions of *Amar Ujala* have recorded a steady rise in readership quarter on quarter and grown from an AIR of 85.83 lakh in Q3 to 86.40 lakh in Q4. Next in line, *Rajasthan Patrika* has seen a slight fall this quarter from an AIR of 72.17 lakh in Q3 to 71.66 lakh in Q4, which is still higher than its readership numbers of the previous two quarters.

The second five in the order of top ten Hindi dailies in India, have all recorded growth in Q4. The closest next, *Punjab Kesari,* comes in at number five, growing from an AIR of 34.99 lakh in Q3 to 35.59 lakh in Q4, a readership highpoint of the year, for the publication. At number seven, *Navbharat Times* has grown across quarters from an AIR of 24.72 lakh in Q1 and settling at a 25.79 lakh in Q4.

Prabhat Khabar and *Nai Dunia,* which are at the number eight and number nine spots respectively in Q4, have seen quite a tough battle through the year. Tracing back to Q1, both dailies stood at 12.70 lakh AIR. In Q2, however, *Nai Dunia* bettered *Prabhat Khabar* with an AIR of 14.08 lakh, while the latter touched an AIR of 13.46 lakh. In Q3, *Nai Dunia* continued to hold the number eight position but *Prabhat Khabar's* significant growth in Q4 (Q3's 14.65 lakh in 16.79 lakh in Q4) led it to regain the eighth place in Q4. *Nai Dunia* closed with an AIR figure of 16.71 lakh. *Hari Bhoomi* comes in at number ten, growing quarter on quarter from an AIR of 13.55 lakh in Q1 to an AIR of 15.10 lakh in Q4.

IRS 2010 Q4: *Navbharat Times* tops in Delhi

Navbharat Times has continued its lead in Delhi and NCR, but Q4 sees an interesting fight for the number three position in Delhi. Four of the top 10 have registered decline in Delhi, and in Delhi Urban (NCR), five dailies of the top 10 have lost readers.

In an interesting development, with AIR at 7.37 lakh, *Punjab Kesari* has replaced *Dainik Jagran* in the third position in Delhi. *Dainik Jagran* registered an AIR of 6.92 lakh, a decline of 1.7 per cent in readership as against the previous quarter.

Sitting at the top, *Navbharat Times*, with a growth of 4.23 per cent, has clocked an AIR of 18.71 lakh. The growth story for NBT in Delhi has continued since the IRS R1 2009 results. *Hindustan,* with steady growth in the last few quarters, has been able to register an AIR of 11.69 lakh, a growth of 0.52 per cent as compared to Q3.

While *Nai Dunia* (Q4 AIR of 99,000 in Delhi) has been able to garner growth of 25.32 per cent over Q3, *Amar Ujala* and *Rashtriya Sahara* have seen a decline in readership.

Dainik Bhaskar, with an AIR figure of 39,000 has seen a growth of 14.71 per cent in readership in the Delhi market. *Aaj Samaj*, with a negative growth of 18.52 per cent, has registered an AIR count of 22,000 as per IRS 2010 Q4.

No big changes were seen in the Delhi urban market in the ranking of dailies. As per IRS 2010 Q4, *Navbharat Times* is the leader in the market with an AIR of 19.71 lakh, a growth of 3.79 per cent, against Q3. *Hindustan,* with an AIR figure of 13.4 lakh, has seen a growth of 1.44 per cent.

Dainik Jagran, despite a decline of 1.1 per cent in AIR as against Q3, has maintained its number three position in the Delhi urban market. Jagran has an AIR figure of 10.82 lakh. *Punjab Kesari* has grown in the NCR region as well. With a growth of 5.19 per cent, it has registered an AIR of 8.31 lakh.

Decline in readership has continued for *Amar Ujala* in the Delhi urban market too. It has dropped from an AIR of 2.5 lakh in Q3 to an AIR of 2.47 lakh in Q4.

Dainik Bhaskar has de-grown by 5.34 per cent. From an AIR figure of 1.31 in Delhi Urban, Bhaskar's Q4 readership numbers stand at 1.24 lakh. *Nai Dunia* has grown from 79,000 to 99,000 AIR in Q4. *Rashtriya Sahara* has registered an AIR of 74,000 in Delhi Urban, a decline of 9.76 per cent. *Hari Bhoomi,* with a growth of 2.38 per cent has clocked an AIR figure of 43,000 in Q4. *Aaj Samaj* has witnessed a reductionof 26.83 per cent and recorded an AIR of 30,000 as per IRS 2010 Q4.

IRS 2010 Q4: Seven language dailies register decline

Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Bengali, Oriya and Punjabi dailies have lost average issue readership, while Hindi, Malayalam, English, and Kannada language dailies have registered growth.

All the top three Gujarati dailies including *Gujarat Samachar, Sandesh* and *Divya Bhaskar* and have recorded a loss of 72,000, 74,000 and 60,000 in average issue readership, respectively. Tamil dailies are the second biggest losers, having recorded a loss in the AIR of 1.81 lakh this quarter. The Tamil language is also the biggest loser since IRS 2010 Q1, with a loss of 7.62 lakh readers. *Dinakaran* gained 1.16 lakh AIR, the only Tamil daily to feature in the Top 10 list of publications. *Daily Thanthi* lost 2.31 lakh readers in the quarter, the maximum by any daily in the Top 10 list. Another top daily to have lost readership is *Dinamalar,* having lost 1.37 lakh readers in the quarter.

The third biggest losers are Bengali dailies, having lost 1.76 lakh readers this time. In fact, Bengali dailies have lost 3.14 lakh AIR since Q1 2010. The only Bengali daily to feature in Top 10 list, *Anandabazar Patrika,* has lost 3.60 lakh AIR since Q1, 2010. The No. 2 Bengali daily *Bartaman* also registered a marginal decline of 24,000 readers this quarter.

Although Marathi dailies have lost AIR -- a loss of 1.39 lakh -- they has gained 3.61 lakh readers since Q1, 2010. The only Marathi daily to feature in the list, *Lokmat,* recorded a gain of 3.51 lakh since the first quarter of IRS 2010. Though the No. 2 Marathi daily, *Daily Sakal,* added a paltry 13,000 this time, the third largest local daily, *Pudhari,* recorded a loss of 56,000 in AIR.

Telugu, Oriya and Punjabi dailies also registered a marginal decline of 21,000, 25,000 and 48,000, respectively, in the quarter. The Punjabi dailies, *Ajit* and *Jag Bani,* lost 8,000 and 25,000 readers. Amongst Telugu dailies, *Eenadu,* added 98,000 readers since Q1, 2010, though it recorded a loss of 1.20 lakh in the current quarter. *Andhra Jyothi* also witnessed a loss in AIR -- a loss of 1.45 lakh. The only Telugu daily amongst top three to register a gain is Sakshi, adding 1.38 lakh readers in the quarter.

The No. 1 Oriya daily, *Sambad,* lost 53,000 readers. *Dharitri* is now the No. 2 Oriya daily and has added 62,000 readers. *Samaj,* which has been pushed to the No. 3 position, has lost 33,000 readers in this quarter.

Hindi dailies are the biggest gainers, registering a gain of 15.42 lakh AIR in the current quarter of IRS. The national language has added 39.90 lakh readership since Q1, 2010. *Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhaskar, Hindustan* and *Amar Ujala* are among the top five dailies -- they have collectively added 12.90 lakh AIR. While *Hindustan* added 6.13 lakh average issue readers, *Dainik Bhaskar* added 5.04 lakh.

The second biggest language to register gain, based on AIR, is Malayalam -- Malayalam dailies added 3.64 lakh this time, and 12.05 lakh since the first quarter of IRS 2010. While *Malayala Manorama* registered a marginal gain of 3,000, *Mathrubhumi* lost 41,000.

English dailies are the third biggest gainers, having added 2.79 lakh readers in the latest quarter. The language is on a growth spree and has added 5.27 lakh AIR since Q1, 2010. All the top three English language dailies, including *The Times Of India, Hindustan Times* and *The Hindu,* registered a gain this time.

Kannada dailies gained 2.33 lakh in numbers. The top three Kannada dailies, *Vijay Karnataka, Prajavani* and *Kannada Prabha,* registered an increase in the AIR of 50,000, 2.70 lakh and 1.22 lakh, respectively.

Deccan Chronicle launches in Kochi

Deccan Chronicle, with a total readership of 2,681,000 readers (IRS Q4 data), launched its Kochi edition on March 18, 2011. The launch follows the daily's Coimbatore edition launch on December 28, 2010 with an initial print run of about 50,000 copies. Entering a space where *The Hindu* has over years held the leader position it will be interesting to see how the daily will break into the market and acquire readers. The initial print run for the Kochi edition is 25,000 copies and the daily expects to grow to a much larger circulation in a short time. The newspaper is priced at Rs 2.50 on all days.

Hyper-local editions to the fore in Hindi belt

Hindi daily *Hindustan* launched its hyper-local Hapur edition (Uttar Pradesh) on January 24, 2011, with eight pages dedicated to local news. Hindustan had already launched its Ghaziabad, Noida, Gurgaon and Faridabad editions with hyper-local news pages.

Hindi newspapers have been very active in the Delhi-NCR regions in recent times. Smaller towns, too, have been targeted for hyper-local editions of various dailies. In January, *Patrika* launched hyper-local editions in Bhopal and Indore. For the old and new areas in these cities, *Patrika* had divided its mainline newspaper into two parts – Golden and Metro editions.

The Golden and Metro editions in both these cities will focus predominantly on the areas they cover yet, a judicious mix of the news from all over the town will also be maintained so that the readers in both the parts of the cities are aware of the major happenings of the day. Though the old

and new parts of the cities have distinct lifestyles and consumption habits, there were various other factors too which have provided *Patrika* with the base to come out with two separate and exclusive sections of the newspaper in the form of Golden Bhopal/Indore and Metro Bhopal/Indore.

The old parts of the cities have their own set of problems that need a representation before the administration and government bodies. The modernised parts of the cities on the other hand have their own stories that need to be communicated. Golden and Metro sections of *Patrika* in Bhopal and Indore aims to communicate such problems.

TOI launch shakes up Coimbatore market

Before The Times of India launched in Coimbatore in February, language dailies and English dailies in the market underwent price cuts as well as a revamp in content.

The New Indian Express reduced its cover price from Rs 3.20 to Rs 2, while its Sunday edition is now priced at Rs 3 (earlier priced at Rs 4.50). However, *Deccan Chronicle* continues to be available at Re 1 on weekdays and Rs 2 on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Hindu, too, has revamped its content with the introduction of new columns and has also been undertaking marketing initiatives such as Spot a Gift (gifts are given if people comply with traffic rules). *The Hindu Metro Plus* is now a daily supplement, with the Weekend Metro Plus on Friday.

Tamil daily Dinamalar raised its price from Rs 3.50 to Rs 4 for all days and Rs 5 for Sundays.

DNA drops edit page

In a surprising albeit bold move, English newspaper *Daily News & Analysis (DNA)* has dropped its edit page from the newspaper. Instead, it will be giving comprehensive news in different pages of the newspaper. Letters to the editor will now appear on Page 2.

This apart, *DNA* is also doing away with 'leaders', the 400-word unsigned editorials. "Instead, as and when a news event warrants a stand by *DNA*, it will appear on Page 1," Aditya Sinha (the editor) said.

Meanwhile, strong reactions have erupted from the journalistic fraternity, especially on Twitter, on *DNA's* move. Experts believe that there are various pros and cons of having an edit page in a newspaper. From the cost-effectiveness point of view, the edit page has always remained a challenge for newspapers. On the one hand, these pages remain ad-free, also the columnists on the page have to be paid a good amount of money. It remains to be seen whether this initiative of *DNA* will pay off in the future and whether other newspapers will follow suit.

DNA is owned by Diligent Media Corporation, a joint venture between Dainik Bhaskar Group and Zee Group. Launched in Mumbai in July 2005, the newspaper operates in Mumbai, Bangalore and other cities such as Pune, Ahmedabad, Surat and Jaipur.

DB Corp to launch Marathi daily in Maharashtra

After Hindi, Gujarati and English language publications, DB Corp Ltd is set to launch its first Marathi daily in Maharashtra. The company informed BSE on February 3, 2011, that it would be launching its Marathi publication soon.

Recently, the Marathi newspaper market has witnessed quite a few developments. While the beginning of January 2011 saw the Times Group launching *Maharashtra Times* in Pune, Marathi daily *Sakal* went all-colour in the city.

DB Corp reported a 29.2 per cent increase in its Q3 FY11 consolidated advertising revenue, to Rs 2,810 million from Rs 2,176 million. Total revenues have grown by 24 per cent to Rs 3,482 million in Q3, as against Rs 2,814 million in Q3 of last year.

DB Corp has a presence in 13 states and one union territory. The flagship newspapers of the group – *Dainik Bhaskar* (in Hindi), *Divya Bhaskar* and *Saurashtra Samachar* (in Gujarati) – have a presence in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The other newspapers of the group include *Business Bhaskar*, *DB Gold* and *DB Star*, and, on a franchisee basis, *DNA* (in Gujarat and Rajasthan).

TOI in Madhya Pradesh

Bennett Coleman & Co (BCCL) is all set to launch an edition of *The Times of India* (TOI) from Madhya Pradesh. The first edition of the English daily in the state will be launched from Bhopal, followed by an edition from Indore.

The literacy rate of Bhopal is around 64.11 per cent. The economy of Bhopal is mainly dependent on various industries including electrical goods, cotton, chemicals, jewellery, cotton and flourmills, textiles, painting, sporting equipments and education.

According to sources close to the development, the BCCL group has tied-up with *Nai Dunia* for the new edition, to use the latter's printing facility in Bhopal. The group will launch the Bhopal edition with an initial print run of 25,000-30,000 copies.

The edition will be circulated to all the major cities of the state including Jabalpur, Gwalior, Sagar and others. The Delhi edition of *The Times of India* reaches Bhopal and its neighbouring cities, whereas, Indore gets the Mumbai edition. At present, TOI has a print run of 7,000-8,000 for Bhopal and 13,000-

14,000 copies for Indore. In Bhopal, the daily will face competition from *Hindustan Times* and *The Pioneer* as well as the recently launched *Hitavada Times.*

As per the latest quarter of IRS, Q3 IRS 2010, TOI (Delhi edition) has a total readership of 29,000 in Bhopal and 1.63 lakh in the entire state.

Prabhat Khabar rolls out Bhagalpur edition

Further strengthening its base in the Bihar-Jharkhand belt, *Prabhat Khabar* launched its Bhagalpur edition on January 10, 2011. The daily is the first all-colour newspaper from the silk city. The newspaper is aggressively priced and has higher pagination than several of its competitors.

The launch had preceded an extensive carpet field survey of over 45,000 households in the city of Bhagalpur, where the reading households were offered lucrative subscription offer. Bhagalpur is the first city where *Prabhat Khabar* seems to have taken an early lead and hopes to build a comprehensive lead further.

With this, *Prabhat Khabar* now has nine editions in its stable. KK Goenka, MD, said *Prabhat Khabar* was being offered to readers at a cover price of Rs 2, as against Rs 4 by its competitor. On its launch day, *Prabhat Khabar* reportedly circulated 30,000 copies in city.

With this, Bihar now gets comprehensive coverage through *Prabhat Khabar's* three editions from Patna, Muzaffarpur and Bhagalpur, and also gets focused through the two other neighbourhood editions of *Siliguri* (which covers the north eastern regions of Bihar) and one more from Deoghar, which focuses on the bordering regions of Bihar-Jharkhand.

Maharashtra Times in Pune

The Times Group launched Marathi daily *Maharashtra Times* in Pune in January. The newspaper is in all-colour format, with an initial print run of 3 lakh copies.

The *Maharashtra Times* Pune edition will have supplements such as *Pune Times* (Marathi), *Pragati Fast* (Education-Career) and *Weekend Property.* Moreover, on the advertisers and agency front, the group has already initiated activity in the Pune market and is in the process of rolling it out to the major metros.

Dainik Bhaskar in new avatar

Dainik Bhaskar launched a new content newspaper in January. The new content mix across pages is a result of extensive research and analysis by cross-member teams. More than 5,400 man hours of planning went into the effort. Once the framework was aligned and established to the group's satisfaction and successfully passed the readers' filter, teams across the centre were trained.

Meanwhile, Sunday Bhaskar has been revamped, and the newspaper is using a unique cover story style to present stories. This will have a unique feature in terms of design and layout with a special jacket for content and not for an advertisement. This will differentiate the weekend edition from other weekdays and competition. City Bhaskar is one of the largest city-based supplements with a reader base comprising youngsters and women. The design, layout and typography have been changed to reflect the content.

Amar Ujala launches Yuvan in Kanpur

Along the lines of its education project, *Amar Ujala* launched its weekly Hindi youth centric newspaper Yuvan on January 24 in Kanpur. Priced at Rs 5, Yuvan will be available only in schools and colleges.

Yuvan is targeted at the youth studying in Hindi-medium schools in Kanpur. Students of various schools and colleges will be given opportunities to work as reporters for the newspaper. In the first phase, *Yuvan* will be available in 150 schools in the city. The newspaper will follow a subscription-based revenue model. For the first four months, the newspaper will be available for Rs 50. *Yuvan* will be in all-colour and carry a total of 24 pages.

Rail Bandhu, India's first train magazine

Indian Railways is all set to launch its first-ever print publication on April 16, marking the occasion of Rail Diwas. Titled *Rail Bandhu,* the magazine will be a monthly and will be launched in the premium trains of Northern Railways. In the pilot run, the title will be distributed free of cost to the passengers of trains such as the Shatabdi and the Rajdhani Express. The magazine will have an initial print run of one lakh. Depending on its success, the print order can be increased to up to 8 lakh copies.

On average, the general interest magazine will have 100 pages, including content and advertisements. The content mix of the inaugural issue will include a story on how Rabindranath Tagore lost and found the manuscript of Geetanjali in one of the London tubes, saloon car recipes from the British era and a story by Ruskin Bond. The first issue of the magazine will also feature the family members of the Railways employees, who were medal winners at the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

Rail Bandhu will be an all-colour magazine and

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

FILM & TV STUDIES

One Year Diploma Courses
with Best Practical Training

One Year P.G. Diploma Courses

- P. G. Diploma in Radio & T V Journalism*
- P. G. Diploma in Direction & Script writing*
- P. G. Diploma in Radio & T V Production*
- P. G. Diploma in Media Management

** Courses marked * includes 4 weeks advance training at Doordarshan TV Channel*

One Year Diploma after 12th Pass

- Diploma in Electronic Media
- Diploma in Professional Photography
- Diploma in Video Camera and Lighting
- Diploma in Video Editing & Sound Rec.
- Diploma in T V Acting

College has well equipped T.V. Studio, Photo Studio, Computer Lab and Sound Recording Studio and offers full hands on practice on all equipments.

- Every year Batch starts from end of July
- Admission Test at middle of June
- Forms available around month of May

Become a confident TV Personality with our Practical Training while our Value based Education makes you a better human being

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

Department of Film & TV Studies

Kasturba Gandhi Marg, Near India Gate,
New Delhi - 110001

Telephone : 011-23389449, 23388021

website : www.film-tvstudies.com

will only be available in a select group of trains. The content mix will include news, railway events and features, along with stories that promote tourism in the country. The business model of this magazine will be similar to that followed by in-flight magazines. All costs will be borne by the publishers. The editorial board of the magazine comprises Derek O'Brian and artist Shuvaprasanna.

Patrika launches hyper-local editions in Bhopal, Indore

Patrika launched hyper-local editions in Bhopal and Indore in January. Apart from strengthening its reader base in the two major cities in Madhya Pradesh with these editions, *Patrika* is also targeting local advertisers. For old and new part of these cities, the newspaper is divided into two parts – Golden and Metro editions.

Gujarati newspaper *Sandesh* goes 3D in Ahmedabad

Gujarati daily *Sandesh* came up with a 3D edition in Ahmedabad in the first week of April. Apart from the regular newspaper, a 16-page supplement showcased advertisements in 3-dimensional views for which special glasses had been provided with the feature.

The newspaper claimed that this was the first 3D edition in the Gujarati newspaper domain. The edition carried 3D advertisements from diverse segments of industries such as real estate, telecom, healthcare, consumer durables, FMCG, retail outlets, jewellery, hospitality etc.

The Sandesh Limited is a listed and public limited company headquartered in Ahmedabad. Until 1984, *Sandesh* was a single edition newspaper. Later, under an expansion programme, new editions were launched from Baroda, Surat, Rajkot and Bhavnagar.

Hindustan hits newsstands in new avatar

Hindi daily *Hindustan* hit the newsstands countrywide in new avatar on April 12, 2011. The newspaper has been designed by Mario Garcia, an eminent media designer who had also designed business newspaper *Mint* from the HT stable. Apart from changes in design, format and colour pattern, readers will also see some prominent editorial changes in the newspaper. However, these developments will not have any impact on the cover price of the daily. Meanwhile, *Hindustan* has also come up with a new tagline – *Tarakki Ko Chahiye Naya Nazaria* (Progress needs a new viewpoint).

Sources close to the development informed that Hindustan would come up with two new special magazine supplements as well. The first, named Anokhi, is focused on women, while the other supplement will focus on glamour and movies and will be published every Sunday.

As for the editorial changes, the newspaper will carry links on the front page for the inside page stories, indicating Must Read and Must Know sections. The newspaper will also dedicate a page, five days a week, themed as *Tarakki* (progress) on stories on Science and Technology, Career, Health and Current Affairs. Besides this, on the same page, readers will also get to know about the various new Web sites and their uses.

TOI introduces apps for iPad, iPhone

The Times of India has stepped into the world of applications, with the launch of iPad, iPhone, Android and Blackberry applications on March 28, and within the day the iPad app became the top free app in the India App Store of iTunes.

The apps are aimed to deliver premium offerings to readers who belong to the elite strata of society and are quick to adopt the devices.

The apps offer an in-depth and analytical coverage of TOI's print edition and bring news as it happens 24x7. The Web site contains photo galleries and videos of various categories, which includes news, sports and entertainment.

All apps have social media integration features. The users can save articles for offline reading.

Journalist opens school for children in Keonjhar

With the growing menace of the Maoists targeting young children, a local journalist opened a residential school in the Maoist-affected district of Keonjhar in Orissa. Malay Mohapatra, the journalist, started the Vidya Bhawan School to provide education to tribal children to ensure they are protected from Maoists. The residential school has 150 students from the Maoist-affected hinterland.

"Maoist cadres have soft-targeted these poverty-stricken families. Here the children are without basic needs and they have been trying to indulge them, bring them into their cadres. So we have been trying to open a school like this that will give them a protected environment, and they can stay away from these other spheres and develop their future," says Mohapatra. The idea of opening a school came to Mohapatra after he saw that tribal children were often kidnapped and recruited to Maoist camps. "I

have been moving around in this district and I have seen the difficulties, the problems of the villages and particularly in the government sector not much has been done, not enough steps have been taken with these kind of children, where they can get some education and they can get proper training with a proper environment to grow. I thought of setting up this school where these children can be put together, where care can be taken at the individual level, so that they can build their future," he says.

The children, too, enjoy coming to school where they forget their fears of being recruited to Maoist camps. "If I wouldn't have come here the Maoists would have taken me along with them," says Reema, a student.

Keonjhar is one of the tribal-dominated districts in Orissa with 80 percent people living below poverty. Although rich in mineral resources, due to the Maoist presence, the district has been vastly underdeveloped, with even basic amenities such as health and education not available in the region. *(Courtesy: ANI)*

P. Sreedharan passes away

Veteran journalist and writer P Sreedharan passed away in Thrissur after a brief illness. He is survived by wife, a son and a daughter.

Sreedharan (72) joined the Express Malayalam daily published from Thrissur (now defunct) as sub-editor in the 1950s and retired as its editor-in-charge after more than 30 years of service with the newspaper. His important works inlcude P. *Sreedharante Thiranjudutha Lekhanangal, Nambiar* (founder editor of the Express Daily) *Pinneyum Munnil, Akavum Puravum* and an anthology of poems *Puli Thinna Pullu.*

Sreedharan had bagged the Kerala Press Academy's Puraskar for his overall contribution to journalism and literature.

Indian journalist wins AFP prize for work in Kashmir

Dilnaz Boga, an Indian reporter and photographer, received the Kate Webb Prize from Agence France-Presse on Wednesday for her courageous investigative work in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Boga, 33, spent a year in Srinagar working for the respected news portal Kashmir Dispatch as well as a number of international publications and Web sites, the culmination of a decade covering the troubled region. She received a certificate and 3,000 euros ($4,200) in cash from Eric Wishart, AFP's regional director for the Asia-Pacific region, in a ceremony at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Hong Kong.

"Dilnaz Boga is a more than worthy recipient of the third Kate Webb Award, and her work stood out from a very strong field of applicants from across the region," Wishart said. Boga said the prize money would help support her future coverage of Kashmir as an independent journalist."I, on behalf of my colleagues in Kashmir, would like to say that we will not stop telling the truth at any cost," Boga said. She vowed to "fight the battle against forgetfulness -- for we know that there can be no peace without justice".

The Kate Webb Prize was launched in 2008 in honour of a legendary AFP correspondent in Asia who blazed a trail for women in international journalism.

The prize recognises exceptional work produced by locally engaged Asian journalists operating in dangerous or difficult circumstances in the region. It is administered by the AFP Foundation, a non-profit organisation created to promote higher standards of journalism worldwide, and the Webb family.

"Dilnaz has shown a lot of drive in going to live in Kashmir to report on the impact of a very volatile situation, and on the lives of ordinary people, especially children," Webb's brother Jeremy and sister Rachel Miller said in a statement. "In doing so, she obviously uses her direct experiences with the people she is reporting on to shape how she writes about issues. That very much reflects Kate's way of operating particularly in the early part of her career," they added.

Before working in Srinagar, Mumbai-based Boga earned a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney with a dissertation on the psychological impact of human rights violations on children in Kashmir.

The inaugural Kate Webb Prize was given in 2008 to Pakistani journalist Mushtaq Yusufzai for his reports from the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The 2009 prize was awarded to the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, which was chosen for its fearless work in the deadliest country for reporters.

Webb, who died in 2007 at the age of 64, was one of the finest correspondents to have worked for AFP, earning a reputation for bravery while covering wars and other historic events in the Asia-Pacific region over a career spanning four decades. She first made her name as a UPI correspondent in the Vietnam War prior to assignments in other parts of Southeast Asia as well as India and the Middle East with AFP. *(Courtesy: AFP)*

VIDURA

A JOURNAL OF THE PRESS INSTITUTE OF INDIA

T.C. No.TN/ENG05025/22/1/2008-TC R.Dis No 1593/08

Press Institute of India -
Research Institute for Newspaper Development
Second Main Road, Taramani CPT Campus, Chennai 600 113
Tele: 044-2254 2344 Telefax: 044-2254 2323

Director
V. Murali
murali@pressinstitute.in

Editor
Sashi Nair
editor@pressinstitute.in

Editorial Assistant
R. Surya
asst.edit@gmail.com

Design and Production
Seetha Ramesh
pre.exec@gmail.com

Manager
N. Subramanian
subramanian@rindsurvey.com

Assistant Manager / Librarian
R. Geetha
rindgeetha@gmail.com

Office Staff
B. Rajendran

The Press Institute of India does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited material. It may not always be possible to reply to senders of unsolicited material. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or publisher.

Every effort has been taken to assure that the accuracy of information contained in this publication is based on reliable sources. All trademark and trade names mentioned in this magazine belong to their respective owners. In case of error editor / publisher shall not be liable for any loss or prejudice caused to the reader. The publisher reserves the copyright of the materials published in the magazine. No part of the articles or photographs can be reproduced without the prior permission of the publisher. All disputes will be subjected to the jurisdiction of Chennai only.

Printed by **V.B.S. Moni** and published by **V. Murali** on behalf of **The Press Institute of India - Research Institute for Newspaper Development,** from RIND premises, Second Main Road, Taramani CPT Campus, Chennai 600 113 and printed at **Print Shop Private Limited,** 4/310 Gandhi Street, Kottivakkam, Old Mahabalipuram Road, Chennai 600 096. Editor: **Sashi Nair**

Annual Subscription for Vidura

Inland:
4 Issues Rs. 200
12 Issues Rs. 500

Overseas : USD 30

Mechanical Details
Page : 185 mm x 255 mm
Bleed : 210 mm x 280 mm
Vertical half page :
93 mm x 255 mm
Horizontal half page :
185 mm x128 mm

Advertisement Tariff

Full Page: B&W: Rs. 5,000
Colour: Rs. 10,000

Half Page: B&W: Rs. 3,000
Colour: Rs. 5,000

Material (images / pictures in 300 dpi and text in 600 dpi) as a PDF file (created in CMYK), can be sent to murali@pressinstitute.in or by CD to our address

Read GRASSROOTS every month

A Journal that looks at social development issues in India. Human interest stories and people who defy the odds.

Published by the **Press Institute of India**

Annual Subscription for Grassroots

12 Issues Rs. 180
36 Issues Rs. 500

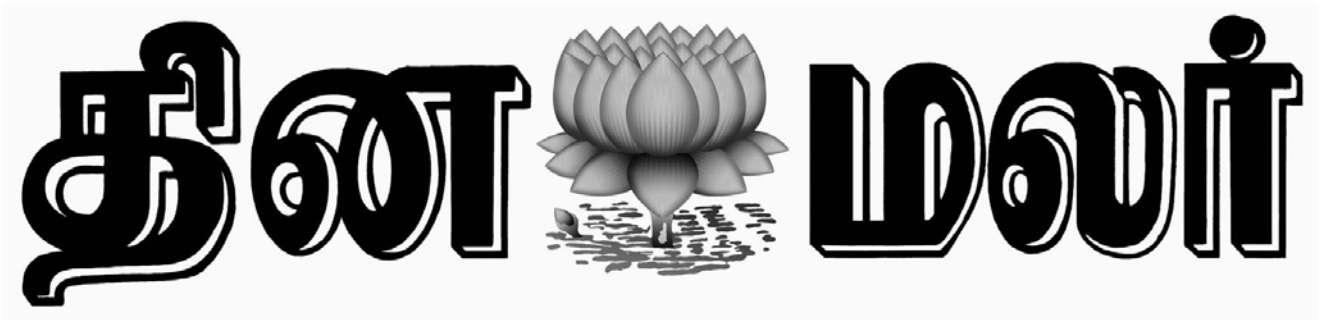
Mechanical Details
Bleed : 275 mm x 350 mm

Advertisement Tariff

Full Page: B&W: Rs. 5,000
Colour: Rs. 10,000

Half Page: B&W: Rs. 3,000
Colour: Rs. 5,000

Material can be sent to murali@pressinstitute.in or by CD to our address



DINAMALAR

NATIONAL TAMIL DAILY

Published simultaneously from

CHENNAI VELLORE PONDICHERRY ERODE SALEM

COIMBATORE TRICHY MADURAI TIRUNELVELI NAGERCOIL

I want to know **more** about Kareena's diet

I want **more** cute comics

I want to know **more** about Lady Gaga's unique style

I want **more** tips on how to spice up my love life

I want to know **more** about Hrithik's dance steps

I want to know **more** about Salman's charity

I want to know **more** about all the things I love

I want **more** on the hottest fashion trends

The Telegraph now gives **more** with an exciting **24-page** t2

Now 52* Pages all colour inclusive of 24-page t2

*On most days of the week. Only available in Calcutta.

The Telegraph becomes value-added like nothing before, with a 24-page t2. Be prepared to always expect more.